The Greastest Historical Discovery of Modern Times

THE TAJ MAHAL IS A TEMPLE PLACE

P.N. OAK

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P.N. OAK
President, Institute
for
Rewriting World History

HINDI SAHITYA SADAN
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This book is dedicated in grateful memory particularly to Her Highness the late Maharani Chandrawati Holkar of Indore, to whose munificence the author owes a part of his academic education, and generally to the great Kshatriya community of India which defended the faith and culture of the country against foreign invasions for milleniums with exemplary devotion to duty, courage, sacrifice and a very high standard of magnanimity and moral purity which distinguish it from all soldiery anywhere in the world.

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PREFACE TO *Taj Mahal was a Rajput Palace*

The serene beauty, majesty and grandeur of the Taj Mahal have made it known all over the world. But what is not so well known is the true story of its origin, that its magnificence stems from its having originated as a palace.

It is a pity that the Taj Mahal is believed to have originated as a sombre tomb in the 17th century when it was perhaps built in the 4th century to serve as a palace.

The suddenness with which his gay and magnificent palace got converted into a tomb must have constituted a very unfortunate occurrence of Jaisingh's life.

The changeover has proved a shroud deluding everybody from lay visitors to researchers and history scholars that the Taj was built as a sepulchre.

Popular nostalgia for legendary love has helped fan the flame of Shahjahan's mythical attachment to Mumtaz into a raging fire, enveloping the Taj in the dazzle of leaping flames and blinding smoke of imaginary accounts, discouraging any cool, dispassionate research about its origin.

The utter incompatibility and inconsistency of the loose bits of information mouthed and written about the Taj Mahal, clanking to a crescendo of jarring notes in my subconscious mind, impelled me to attempt sorting them out from a tangled mass and piecing them together to find out whether they made a coherent and plausible account.

* published April 1965, a forerunner to the present volume.

To my amazement it led me to an unexpected conclusion, namely, that far from originating as a mediaeval tomb the Taj was built by a powerful Rajput king as his palace in pre-Muslim times.

My research has also led to an incidental but nonetheless important finding, that the Peacock Throne too is perhaps as ancient as the Taj Mahal, and that it used to be placed in the chamber which encloses the cenotaphs of Shahjahan and Mumtaz.

My conclusions are based on a number of historical works, both mediaeval and modern. A list of them appears at the end of this book. I have quoted from those authorities extensively. The extracts, accompanied by the relevant details about the name of the book, author and page number, have been included in the narrative itself instead of appearing as footnotes at the bottom of each page.

The conclusions reached in this book might unsettle some important portions of mediaeval history as currently taught and presented. But since all education is a relentless search for the Truth it is hoped that all readers, whether lay admirers of the Taj, prying scholars or researchers, archaeological officials or teachers of history, will neither shy away nor be scared in facing the truth about the Taj.

February, 1965 P. N. Oak

INTRODUCTION
To
The Second Edition

Unlike this book and its forerunner, titled *Taj Mahal was a Rajput Palace*, which are research works, all other books and accounts of the Taj Mahal written during the last 300 years are based on pure fantasy. We were surprised to learn after meticulous inquiry that despite the plethora of printed hocus-pocus churned out on the Taj Mahal all the world over there is not a single book containing a well-documented, comprehensive account of the origin of the Taj Mahal quoting exhaustively only contemporary authorities. Subsequent hearsay accounts are hardly worth any notice for historical research, since one writer's opinion is as good as any other's.

Since the Taj Mahal is a building complex of world renown the absence of a single coherent and unquestionably authentic account is indeed surprising. How and why have universities and research institutions the world over bypassed such a stupendous and attractive subject like the Taj Mahal? Why do all accounts of the Taj Mahal content themselves with merely lisping the self-same, confused, irreconcilable and slipshod, imaginary details about its origin, viz. the period of construction, the expense incurred, the source of the money spent; the designers and workmen, the date of Mumtaz's burial in it, and every other facet?

Perhaps it is just as well that no scholarly body ever succeeded in producing a coherent and authoritative account of the building of the Taj Mahal. Whosoever attempted to do any research on the subject got lost in such a maze of inconsistent and contradictory accounts that he found himself helplessly repeating the same old abracadabra. He had to be content with placing before the reader loose bits of inconsistent, anomalous and contradictory versions on every point. All aspects of the Shahjahan legend regarding the

Taj Mahal being suspect, it was but natural that attempts at compiling an authoritative account of the origin of the Taj Mahal should miserably fail. Nobody ever succeeded in or hoped to say the last convincing word on the origin of the Taj Mahal. All previous attempts were bound to fail since they were all based on a wrong notion. Starting with wrong premises they could not arrive at the right conclusion.

We are going to prove in the following pages that the Taj Mahal - meaning "the Very Crown Among Residences" - is an ancient Hindu building and not a Muslim tomb. We shall also show how all the loose bits of information - whether factual or concocted - dished out on the platter of the Shahjahan legend fall in place and fully support our research. Just as the solution to a mathematical problem may be tested for its accuracy by various methods, similarly, sound historical research provides a consistent and coherent story reconciling all apparent inconsistencies.

In this book we have produced in photostat a passage from Shahjahan's court chronicle, the *Badshahnama*, which disarmingly admits that the Taj Mahal is a commandeered Hindu palace. We have also quoted the French merchant Tavernier, who visited India during Shahjahan's reign, to say that the cost of the scaffolding exceeded that of the entire work done regarding the mausoleum. This proves that all that Shahjahan had to do was engrave Koranic texts on the walls of a Hindu palace; that is why the cost of the scaffolding was much more than the value of the entire work done. We have cited the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as stating that the Taj Mahal building-complex comprises stables and guest and guard rooms. We have quoted Mr. Nurul Hasan Siddiqui's book admitting, as the *Badshahnama* does, that a Hindu palace was commandeered to bury Muntaz in. We have cited Shahjahan's fifth-generation ancestor Babur to prove that he lived in what we call the "Taj Mahal" 100 years before the death of the lady for whom the Taj is believed to have been built as a mausoleum. We have also quoted Vincent Smith to show that Babur died in the Taj Mahal. In addition to these proofs we have scotched the Shahjahan legend in every detail and cited other voluminous evidence proving conclusively that the Taj Mahal is an ancient Hindu building.

The overwhelming proof that we have produced in this book should once for all silence all doubters of the correctness of our finding and convince them that the whole world can go wrong where one man proves right. This has happened time and again in human history. Galileo and Einstein, for example, shocked contemporary humanity out of their rusted dogma-shells.

It was by sheer luck that we happened to find corroboration for our earlier finding on the Taj Mahal, in the *Badshahnama*, Mr. Siddiqui's book, Tavernier's travel account and Babur's *Memoirs*. But we wish to take this opportunity to alert posterity and our contemporaries interested in research and tell them that the proofs set out in our earlier book *(Taj Mahal was a Rajput Palace)* were more than enough to convince all those well versed in judicial procedure and logic that the Taj Mahal existed much before Mumtaz's death whose tomb it is supposed to be.

Even if Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori (the author of the *Badshahnama*) and others had prevaricated, the evidence we marshalled in our earlier book was enough to question their veracity and impel us to seek their motives. This is a lesson worth imbibing by the lay public and by researchers who have to wade through a mire of falsified and distorted accounts.

We have in this book proved to the hilt that the Taj Mahal has been built to its minutest detail according to the ancient Hindu science of architecture of the Hindus, for the Hindus and by the Hindus. Now that we have firmly established it in this and in the earlier book, the topic should encourage further research to trace the history of the Taj Mahal prior to Mansingh's and Babur's possession of it until we get to the original Hindu builder. Jaipur royal records in the Rajasthan Archives at Bikaner or in the possession of the Jaipur ruling house might possess valuable clues. We have ourselves provided some clues in this book indicating that the Taj Mahal must have originated as Tejo Mahalaya completed in 1155-56 A.D.

We had to face a veritable barrage of scoffs and sneers and other worse reactions when we first published our finding. But we are unshaken in our conviction. Those jeers and sneers came from all quarters. Particularly painful were those emanating from

eminent scholars of history. Most of them expressed nothing but vehement contempt either audibly or through various acts of commission and omission. The lay public looked on, dazed in disbelief, and looked up to history teachers and professors, as if they are oracles for cues whether to laud or condemn us.

It is painful to note that scholars, who feel committed to the Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal, either by having authored books on the topic or guided post-graduate students along the beaten track, or by virtue of their bureaucratic and academic standing, showed a marked tendency to remain strait-jacketed in their beliefs. Obstructionist and obscurantist objections were flung at us. Many angrily asserted that we had not proved our case. But that was a most unscholarly attitude. A true devotion to academic research should have urged them to give a second thought to the matter. If they were right, the revision would have worked to their own advantage, because it would have bolstered up their own earlier belief by giving them an opportunity to fill up the holes which we had pointed out. If they were in the wrong their holding on to their earlier dogmas was unwarranted. They thus failed to be guided by the maxim that, "If you are in the right you can afford to keep your temper; if in the wrong you cannot afford to lose it."

There is another maxim for the genuine researcher, that any loopholes pointed out in an existing belief should lead to immediate intensified research rather than anger and hate against one who questions traditional beliefs. Trying to find fault with one who questions hackneyed beliefs is neither good ethics nor good scholarship. Finding fault with the method by which the discovery has been arrived at is worse. For all we know the method employed may be unorthodox or even occult. But what others should worry about is the end product or the result. They may later ask to be enlightened on the method used, but refusing to examine the conclusion by cavilling at the method is missing the wood for the trees.

Luckily for us much water has flown down all the rivers since we first mooted our finding, and today our discovery is not looked upon, at least by some, as fantastic, quixotic, eccentric or just

chauvinistic. The matter does not end with merely admitting the Taj Mahal to be a Hindu palace. That finding has a very far-reaching bearing on both Indian and world histories.

The Taj Mahal has all along been wrongly believed to be the very flower of the mythical Indo-Saracenic architecture. Now that we have proved it to be an ancient Hindu building it should not be difficult for readers to regard with a little more respect and attention our finding explained in the book *Some Blunders of Indian Historical Research* that all mediaeval mosques and tombs in India are conquered and misused Hindu palaces and temples. Thus Mohammad Ghaus's tomb in Gwalior, Salim Chisti's mausoleum in Fatepur Sikri, Nizamuddin's *kabar* in Delhi, Moinuddin Chisti's *makbara* in Ajmer are all erstwhile Hindu buildings lost to Muslim conquest and use.

The other corollary to our finding on the Taj Mahal is that the Indo-Saracenic theory of architecture is a figment of the imagination. It should be deleted forthwith from history books and textbooks of civil engineering and architecture. But the actual amendment needed is minor, namely, that what has been termed as "Indo-Saracenic architecture" should henceforth be understood to mean "ancient Indian architecture."

A third corollary is that the dome is a Hindu form of architecture.

A fourth corollary is that buildings in India and West Asia which have a resemblance to the Taj Mahal are products of Hindu architecture *(Shilpashastra)*. Just as in our own times we find Western architecture to be in vogue all over the world, similarly in ancient times it was only Hindu (Vedic) architecture which was prevalent all over the world no matter where a building was built and for what purpose.

During our discussions with university teachers and book-reviewers we came across some curious objections to our thesis. Having read the earlier book they objected to our methodology as being argumentative, deductive and lawyer-like.

This raises a very interesting point. Do they mean to say that deductive logic and lawyer-like arguments have no place in history research or being detrimental to arriving at correct conclusions

in historical research, should be altogether avoided? Their objection amounts to asserting that the conclusions arrived at by deductive logic or by the adjudicative process are all wrong.

We then ask whether man did not arrive at his present state of knowledge in every branch of human inquiry with the help of his logical faculty? How else did he progress? Take the case of geography. Thousands of years before Man could send up spacecraft to photograph the earth did he not correctly conclude that the earth was round, by sheer logic? This should thoroughly expose the hollowness of the objection. Logic is justly called the science of sciences because it treats of reasoning which is the basis of all knowledge, from which history can claim no exemption.

Moreover, we may remind such objectors that leading lights of historical methodology like Collingwood, Walsh, Renier, Langley, Seignbos, Berkley and Lord Sankey have precisely and repeatedly stressed that detective-type investigation, lawyer like argumentation and deductive reasoning are the very heart and soul of historical methodology, and that a true historian must look with suspicion even on longstanding and seemingly well-founded beliefs. To drive this point home we have included in this book a chapter on methodology. Those unable to extricate themselves from the rut of traditional thinking should know on reading that chapter that the reason why their finding on the origin of the Taj Mahal has been so wide off the truth is precisely because they have ignored or violated the guidelines for research laid down by the very scholars by whose names they have been swearing.

Incidentally this leads to an ancillary conclusion, namely that Indian and world histories have been saddled with numerous wrong concepts precisely because teachers and researchers have all along been following wrong methodology. The fault, therefore, does not lie in our methodology. The boot is on the other leg. It was but natural that antediluvian attitudes should cause havoc in Indian and world history. The result is that today we find to our chagrin, after hundreds of years, that all that we have solicitously taught to generations of students about so-called Muslim architecture in India and their alleged benevolent rule, has to be abandoned.

The need to re-examine the different versions of the Shahjahan

legend of the Taj Mahal arises because the world deserves to be told the truth about this enchanting mansion, namely that the Taj Mahal was not born out of the death of Shahjahan's consort Mumtaz. The ghosts of Shahjahan and Mumtaz have haunted the Taj Mahal story in the minds of the people for 300 long years. It is high time that people's minds were exorcised.

Another very important purpose we have in mind in unravelling the Taj Mahal-creation-riddle is to expose the unmethodical and slipshod manner in which many far-reaching concepts have been grafted on Indian history, and foisted on gullible, unsuspecting lay contemporaries and on posterity. Reconstructing the story of the origin of the Taj Mahal should serve as a practice-lesson in research methodology, exposing lapses committed so far and highlighting the principles and safeguards that need to be kept in view by history researchers and teachers.

This book is also intended to impress on every reader that it is not the cenotaphs which should monopolize his or her attention. The visitor must go round the entire premises, walk along its long arched corridors, run up the Taj Mahal's many storeys and its marble and redstone towers and minutely examine its many vaulted doorways. The two tombs in the basement and the cenotaphs above them on the ground floor are, if anything, but obstructions in the spacious, octagonal chambers of this ancient Hindu palace. One of these rooms housed the ancient Hindu Peacock Throne which too was grabbed by Shahjahan along with the palace.

Thoughtful readers unwittingly but nonetheless irrevocably committed, academically or communally, to the view that Taj Mahal is a Muslim monument are likely to feel perturbed, disturbed and hurt by the revelation in this book. Some others are likely to welcome the discovery of the Taj Mahal's ancient Hindu origin as a coveted truth. To both such we would like to say that to us Truth is like water - tasteless and colourless, divine, pure and life - giving - neither sweet nor bitter. For us Truth is a mere object of discovery - as, in fact, it should be in all creative endeavour. We hardly care if some feel elated or dejected by the discovery of the Hindu antecedents of the Taj Mahal.

In the field of histroy such a breath-taking and epoch-making

discovery, proving the whole world wrong, is a rare occurrence. All the same we claim no personal credit or victory because such discoveries are impossible without supra-natural guidance, opportunity and inspiration.

But to those who would want to underrate or pooh-pooh the antecedents of the Taj Mahal as being of no consequence for a real appraisal of its delicate contours, majestic dimensions and enchanting embellishment we would like to address a few words. Looking at the Taj Mahal as a tomb or a palace makes a world of difference. A palace is the residence of the prosperous, wealthy and powerful, and therefore a down-to-earth buidling. A tomb, on the other hand, is the weird, eerie abode of those who have given up the ghost. Visitors or students labouring under the misapprehension that the Taj Mahal is a mausoleum regard the graves inside it as the focal object of admiration and thereby miss the real beauty of that vast building-complex. On the other hand if visitors and students of history studied the Taj Mahal as a palace they would find their observation rapturously rewarding. In the latter case they would no longer be content with peeping into the burial chamber and walking out, calling it a day, as many have hitherto been prone to do, but would insist on roaming around its spacious grounds, going around its periphery, ambling along its spacious terraces, stumbling through its dark basement chambers and climbing its towers and upper storeys.

Among the many difficulties one encounters in driving a new startling discovery deep down into the basic convictions of the people is one of frivolous objections. For example erudite teachers of history sometimes, in all honesty, refuse to look into historical rebuttals on the ground that "original" historical sources are not quoted. This attitude of theirs has two faults. One is their assumption of the supercilious role of a judge to which they are not entitled. Whatever their academic or bureaucratic standing they must feel a sense of belonging and participation in all research and regard themselves as humble seekers after the Truth, having as good a stake in the rebuttal as the pioneer himself. Looked at from this point of view their self-chosen role of sitting on the sidelines and blowing the whistle like a fault-finding referee is highly improper. The other fault in their peculiar stand-offish and judgment-

pronouncing attitude is the very mechanical, nonchalant and even irresponsible way in which they raise an objection, that the source quoted is only "secondary" and not "original". They feel they are therefore justified in ignoring my research - findings. They clutch at this to ease the qualms of their academic conscience. To all such we would like to say that the technical objection of the source being "original" or "secondary" is relevant only if the facts cited are not admitted. Even a court of law and justice takes judicial notice of age-old facts. Similarly, scholars of history and for that matter other branches of study, have got to take "historical notice" of facts which are not disputed.

For instance, in the following pages when we quote Vincent Smith or Elliot and Dowson it is only to produce before the reader quick, cut and dry, capsule-form, well-digested, translated and summarised evidence from readily available volumes. So long as facts quoted by them are not doubted the objection that the original source has not been quoted is absolutely unjustified if not downright mischievous. How many people can get access to the hand-written originals? If so many people do in fact handle those originals, how long will those originals be available for posterity? And what research could proceed to any appreciable degree if at every stage the researcher's footsteps are dogged with the argument that he has not produced all original sources, all over the world, in all languages, on every point? This way it would be impossible to write even a word. Have the objectors themselves ever tried it in the tomes they have written!

Before the scholarly reader thinks of raising any such objection, therefore, we would request him to consider whether he disputes the quoted facts or words. If the facts or words quoted are not disputed they do not need any artificial props of authority, whether primary or secondary.

The discovery that the Taj Mahal is a Hindu palace should serve to change the perspective of even the Government of India's Archaeological Department. So far they had been under the impression that if the two pairs of cenotaphs were kept open to public inspection that was being generous enough. But once it is admitted that the Taj Mahal is a palace, that small mercy will not be enough. The

barred basements, the many towers, the upper storeys of the marble structure and the subterranean passage leading to the fort will all have to be well cleaned and thrown open to public view.

In browsing through the subsequent pages the reader should be conscious of the very far - reaching bearing that our finding has on both Indian and world history.

One very devastating effect of this book is that at one stroke it renders obsolete all the romantic and pseudo-historic hodge-podge written in prose or poetry about the Taj Mahal throughout the world during the last 300 years.

Architects, as much as historians, may find much to learn and unlearn in reading through the following pages.

Professional historians and architects would do well to get over their initial shock, consternation and disbelief, prepare themselves to jettison their traditional belief in the mythical Indo-Saracenic architecture theory, and instead learn to view extant mediaeval monuments as products of pure ancient, indigenous architecture. Suitable amendments in historical and architectural textbooks will have to be made sooner or later.

Historians, architects and visitors to monuments should now be prepared to shed some of their carefully nursed assumptions based on fallacious tutoring and motivated brainwashing about the so-called Muslim contribution to mediaeval architecture. Muslim contribution to mediaeval architecture in India and all over the world is severely limited to misappropriating Hindu, Christian or Zionist buildings by inscribing Arabic lettering outside or implanting cenotaphs inside. The world-famous Taj Mahal, the Red Forts in Delhi and Agra, the so-called Jama Masjid in Agra, the so-called Fatehpuri Mosque in Delhi and the innumerable monuments in cities like Ahmedabad, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Mandavgadh, Bidar, Bijapur, Fatehpur Sikri and Aurangabad are glaring and graphic instances of such wholesale misappropriation and deception of the entire world. It is hoped that researchers and writers would come forward to write books on individual townships and monuments of mediaeval India and the world to expose what the late Sir H. M. Elliot calls "the impudent and interested fraud" of Muslim history. The writer of the present book will be happy to give them all the necessary

guidance and clues.

Layman sometimes ask that if the Taj Mahal existed centuries before Mumtaz's death in 1630-31, could not the radioactive carbon - 14 test be applied to determine its age? This is a question for experts to answer. If they have an infallible method they would certainly detect the difference in age of the material used in the cenotaphs and in most other parts of the Taj Mahal. But for any such test to be useful its margin of error must be precisely known. A five to ten years' margin would not matter very much but if it extends to several centuries the tests would be unsuitable to verify the accuracy of the conclusion drawn from historical evidence that the Taj Mahal is a Hindu building commandeered for use as a Muslim tomb.

Our government should now address itself to the task of amending its tourist literature, histories, archaeological shibboleths and official dossiers on the Taj Mahal and other mediaeval buildings.

And the entire citizenry should gear itself up to bring about a complete change in its historical outlook and perspective.

N-128, Greater Kailas-1
New Delhi - 110048. P. N. Oak

Dated February 1, 1980
Footnotes :
Two amendments to the above introduction now called for are as under

1. On page 13 it has been stated that the term Taj Mahal means (as per Muslim parlance), if at all, 'The Very Crown Among Residences.' But it now transpires that Shahjahan-era Muslim writers have scrupulously avoided using the term Taj Mahal. Moreover Mahal is not at all a Muslim term. Thirdly even if Taj Mahal had been a Muslim term it would have been Mahal-e-Taj and not Taj Mahal.
2. A carbon-14 test has actually been carried out by a New York-based laboratory, around 1974 A.D., on a piece of timber from a broken, softened doorway plank of the rear, river-side, northeast doorway of the Taj. It proved that the timber doorway pre-dated Shahjahan by about 300 years.

PREFACE TO The Third Edition

In presenting the third edition to the reader it gives me great satisfaction to record that the earlier universally held blind notion about Shahjahan's authorship of the Taj Mahal has been considerably eroded because of the evidence adduced in the preceding editions. This edition embodies three new chapters and some other major changes.

In the earlier edition there were two chapters on Tavernier which we have trimmed and consolidated into a single chapter. Similarly, two separate chapters on the British and Maharashtriya encyclopaedias have also been trimmed and made up into one.

Out of the three new chapters added two adduce new evidence while the third answers specific questions which readers of earlier editions have at times asked.

I am grateful to Dr. A. W. Joshi, Department of Physics, Meerut University, Meerut, for supervising the publication of this edition.

P. N. Oak

N-128, Greater Kailas-I
New Delhi - 110048
February, 1974

INTRODUCTION
To
This Edition

This edition titled THE TAJ MAHAL IS A TEMPLE PALACE has been out of print since 1970.

Earlier two editions bearing the same title were published in 1968 and 1969 respectively.

Those were preceded by three other editions. The first one titled THE MAHAL WAS A RAJPUT PALACE appeared in 1965. Thereafter a commercial establishment M/S India Book House brought out two sleek, paperback editions of 5000 copies each in quick succession. Their worldwide sale channels made the book widely known through display in London book shops, five star hotels, railway stations and airports in many parts of the world.

Then something happened and they dropped it like an hot brick. Perhaps the Congress party in power in India dropped dark hints through its secret service of dire consequences to the publishers. There were two possible reasons. One was the fear that if the disclosure of the Hindu origin of the Taj Mahal was not throttled the enblock Muslim vote, which enabled the Indian National Congress to rule India would be lost. The other factor was the pressure of the academic block comprising professors of history, architecture and archaeology, bureaucrats manning related departments, tourist officials and publicity media representatives who felt threatened that the un-verified sepulchral legend of the Taj Mahal that they had been sponsoring with great flourish and aplomb for over a century through photos, articles, books and exhibits would be exposed as sheer propagandistic and bombastic sham.

Since I lacked enough financial resources and wide sale outlets

I had to resign myself to my book on the Taj Mahal remaining out of print though it had a unique sentinel-like role to perform of awakening and warning the world community of being bluffed and cheated by the concocted Shahjahan- Mumtaz legend of the Taj.

In fact the research methodology expounded in tracing the Hindu origin of the Taj Mahal in this book deserves to be ranked as a valuable contribution in itself since it will help genuine, honest researchers rid history of a lot of chauvinistic sham and cant which clogs history because of long, alien rule and under alien-minded native rule.

In 1990 a sincere friend, Mr. Arvind Ghosh settled in Houston, Texas, USA published a paperback American edition of my book titled TAJ MAHAL - THE TRUE STORY which is still available.

I am grateful to Mr. Shanand Satyadeva of Stanger, Natal, South Africa who too, like Mr. Ghosh, realizing the necessity of making the book available to serious and honest scholars and tourists, has generously offered to finance the publication of this edition the TAJ MAHAL IS A TEMPLE PALACE through his charitable trust.

Starting from the first edition titled THE TAJ MAHAL WAS A RAJPUT PALACE every subsequent edition has included more and more evidence. The present edition too has two additional chapters one indicates that 230 years prior to Mogul Emperor Shahjahan's accession to the throne his own remote ancestor, Tamerlain had been so overcome by the beauty of the Taj Mahal that he wanted a similar building raised for himself in his native place. Like every other medineval Muslim source the Arab chronicler who records Tamerlain's longing for the attractive contours of the Taj Mahal also severely shuns mentioning the name Taj Mahal with Islamic disdain for a Vedic term. Incidentally that Islamic hatred for the term Taj Mahal and Tamerlain's longing for an identical edifice also prove that the Taj Mahal is not the 'deadly' Muslim monument that it is made out to be.

The other added chapter concerns the Carbon - 14 dating of the Taj Mahal.

This edition is also being profusely illustrated (rectifying an earlier failing because of my meagre personal financial resources) thanks to the unflinching liberal financial backing so kindly and generously volunteered by Mr. Shanand Satyadeva from his trust.

The belief that Mumtaz had on a romantic moonlit night entreated her much-shared spouse Shahjahan to bury her in a dreamland monument is one of the many fraudulent canards set afoot to bedeck the concocted Shahjahan - Mumtaz - Taj mahal tangled triangle. Entire Islamic history is full of such unverified, motivated myths which need to be critically examined and determinedly exposed.

That in spite of the overwhelming available evidence produced in this book in chapter after chapter proving that the Taj Mahal alias Tejomahalaya temple palace complex has existed centuries before Shahjahan, generations of modern scholars have for the last 150 years been blandly and blindly passing on the unverified Shahjahan Mumtaz myth with great gusto and glamour. That is a measure of the mediocrity, gullibility, academic dishonesty and intellectual inertia of modern scholarship. As with dozing sentries anything with a Muslim label passes their muster unquestioned.

The second serious failing of modern historical scholarship is its total insensitivity and insincerity. Though I have written book after book proving that renowned monuments from Kashmir to Cape Comorin are all Hindu though they are being tom-tommed as Muslim that has not disturbed the sonorus snoring slumber of any professional historian, historical body or university.

Had they been true to their job they should have convened special sessions of regional and world historical bodies to re-examine the entire doctrine of historical Islamic architecture and either hauled me up before the bar of world historical scholarship or confessed to the professional ineptitude of their entire fraternity and started a compulsory refresher course to purge their minds of the sediments of the cooked-up Islamic architecture theory.

A practical instance of the total unconcern of the scholastic world to my revolutionary finding that the entire Islamic architecture theory is baseless was provided by the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

When I wrote to the chairman of the Board of Editors of the encyclopaedia the surprising reply I received was that they had referred the matter to their expert and he had opined that no correction was called for. That amounted to placing supreme faith in the assertion of the accused himself that he is not guilty.

All news media too have been equally guilty not only in failing to publicise this history-shaking discovery but in actively going out of their way to suppress it. For instance on a number of occasions when any news items concerning the Taj Mahal, published in European or American newspapers routinely recalled that Shahjahan was its originator I addressed letters to the editors of Sunday Times, London; Christian Science Monitor, Washington Post, New York Times and Time magazine all of USA who carried the news, informing them of some salient points among the nearly 120 proofs that I have discovered about the pre-Shahjahan existence of the Taj Mahal, yet they never allowed any of my letters to get published in their papers.

This is a question not only of journalistic propriety but even of ethics. Should editors go out of their way to blot out important news even from the readers' column ? Journalists often claim that they have a nose for news. As such the above-named papers should have asked their correspondents in New Delhi to report in depth on my revolutionary discovery that the Taj Mahal and thousands of other spectacular historic monuments in India (and abroad too) popularly ascribed to Muslim invaders are all captured property. Far from following that important scent as news-hounds all leading news media have behaved like mongrels with their tails tucked in their hind-legs terrified to expose the falsity of the Islamic architecture theory which amounts to professional dictatorship, palsy and lunacy.

The B.B.C. representative in New Delhi who filmed a television documentary on historical monuments in India persisted in describing the so-called Jama Masjid in Ahmedabad as a Muslim creation even though he was informed by a shopkeeper opposite that the Muslim claim to that building had been disproved in a court case and that the edifice was a temple of mother goddess Bhadrakali captured by the Muslims around 1414 A. D. and advertised as their mosque. Historians and journalists must not take such Muslim claims to

[illegible] buildings at their face value. They must have the sagacity to detect the purpose of the original builder from the look of the edifice and the details of its decor. They must be able to distinguish a hijacker from the real father of an historic building.

Germans proved no better. Der Spiegel a leading German magazine once sent its representative in New Delhi to interview me on my radical discovery questioning the Muslim authorship of historic buildings. I felt flattered. But later I learned that they had played foul and the write-up they published had ridiculed my discovery and poked fun at it.

There thus seems to be not only a total apathy but even a conspiracy among world news media and historical circles to suppress the news as much as they can of the falsity of the Islamic architecture concept.

It was that notorious mentality which burned Joan of Arc as a witch at the stake and extracted an abject apology from Galileo to escape a similar fate for discovering and asserting that the earth went round the sun and not vice versa.

The earth has turned many full circles since and brought about a qualitative change in punishment in as much as it is not the author who is any more thrown into the fire but his dicoveries are certainly thrown into the raging fire of journalistic and scholastic ire in a global gang-up under which far-reaching historical discoveries like mine are denied all serious debate and publicity by bureaucrats, news-media bosses and professional historians.

It is a pity that tourist officials, licensed guides, professional historians, architects, archaeologists, journalists and a host of others who nonchalantly continue to lustily describe the Taj Mahal as having been built as a sepulchre are allowed to get away with their dogmatic pro-Shahjahan assertions, with impunity.

The habit of Muslim invaders to misrepresent all conquered historic buildings as their own creations and the imbecile attitude of lazy academicians to accept those claims at face value lying down have allowed the Islamic architecture theory to strike deep roots in [illegible] academics.

Therefore prestigeous universities such as Harvard and Princeton, who are believed to have the heart and resources to sponsor research in promising unconventional directions ought to subject the Islamic architecture theory to a thorough scrutiny.

Far from that the architectural faculty of the Harvard University and the Massachussets Institute of Technology are jointly administering a programme of so-called Islamic Architecture funded by a munificent donation of millions of dollars by the Aga Khan.

Money makes the mare go runs a well-known adage. True to that architecture-scholars of the two venerable American academies mentioned above hold a lecture or two per year dilating on so-called Islamic architecture. This is academics in the reverse gear consolidating a falsehood instead of uprooting it.

In administering that programme the academic worthies of those two august educational establishments have not even bothered to ascertain whether there is at all any Islamic architecture.

They ought to know that all renowned historic buildings and townships around the world are structures captured but not built by Muslim invaders. For instance the Dome on the Rock and Al Aqsa in Jerusalem, the Alhambra and Cardova mosque (sic) in Spain, the so-called Tamerlain mausoleum and Shah-i-Zind in Russia and the Taj Mahal and thousands of so-called mosques and tombs in India are all buildings captured ready-made by Islam.

Muslim invaders planted a few cenotaphs inside captured buildings and scrawled some irrelevant Islamic lettering on the walls. It is such superficial tampering which has misled scholars hitherto into attributing those buildings to Muslims.

Believers in Islamic architecture ought to re-examine the entire issue of Islamic architecture de novo from the very beginning.

They must first ask themselves whether Mohammed or any of his successor caliphs are on record saying that their new religion needed a new type of architecture? There is no such assertion on record.

Secondly do Muslims have any classic architectural treatises

of their own ? They don't.

Thirdly Islam doesn't have any architectural measuring units of its own.

Fourthly did they have any architectural academies any where ? The answer is 'nil.'

Fifthly do they have any hereditary masonry professionals as the Hindus have in India ? There are none. Contrarily Muslim invaders such as Mohammed Ghaznavi and Tamerlain have recorded that they were so overwhelmed by the beauty and grandeur of Hindu forts, palaces, temples, townships and river ghats that in the general massacres which they perpetrated of all Hindus they took care to separate and spare Hindus with masonary and architectural skills to be driven at sword-point to tend historic buildings or raise new ones in their own lands. Therefore, far from Muslims raising historic buildings in India it is the Hindus who have raised historic edifices in lands now occupied by Islam.

It needs to be realized that Islam originated in Mecca only 1370 years ago. In other lands swept by Islam it is not even that ancient. Such a short duration steeped in illiteracy, rape and rapine is neither adequate nor conducive to conjure and develop a new style of architecture.

Moreover invasions are undertaken to misappropriate victim countries' temples and palaces. The aim of all invasions is to captrue ready resources and not mere open tracts of land to raise mere mosques and tombs at that, of which there was no dearth in Islamic desert stretches.

How is it that for generations it didn't strike any scholar that in the Muslim world most historic edifices are tombs and tombs and mosques and mosques without any corresponding palaces ? Did Muslim corpses need multi-storied palatial mansions with hundreds of rooms and scores of stairways while the same potentates when alive needed no roof over their heads ? The absence of such cross-questioning and cross-checking bares the flaws of the much - vaunted modern research methods.

Yet another failing of modern research practices is their

compromise with and reticence about patent frauds. We have cited plenty of evidence in the following pages to indicate that the Tajmahal complex consists of several seven-storied edifices of which only garden level floors are open to the public while the others are either sealed with brick and lime by Shahjahan or are kept intriguingly locked by the Indian Government's Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Why should not the world hound the life out of the ASI to force it to open all the sealed or locked stories ? Is the ASI a mere deceptive ornament ? Is it not supposed to pry into hidden evidence ? Had the ASI been honest to its job it would have dredged even the water in the seven-storied well to see whether important articles, idols or inscriptions lie jettisoned there.

But the ASI being a limb of the pro-Muslim Congress Govt. in power its employees are shrewd and careful enough to safeguard their own salary and position. That is why they refrain from probing anything which is likely to exacerbate Muslim feelings, expose Muslim canards and thereby antagonize the Government.

Professional historians too find themselves in a similar predicament. An average Muslim professor would be reluctant to concede that the worldwide credit that attaches to Muslims as builders of great buildings is misplaced. The Hindu professor too having learned the same falsified history is reluctant (even though convinced in the heart of his heart) to declare that history to be untrustworthy for fear of attracting the hostility of his non-Hindu colleagues, since they all share alternating duties as paper-setters, examiners and staff selection committee members.

All professors, museologists, archaeologists and architects also refrain from disowning false history because all of their academic degrees, their published books and research papers have been based on the presumption that the history they have learnt is the tinsel truth.

The minds of Christian professors besides being conditioned by the above mundane and mercenary considerations, are prone to trot out a further excuse that as third parties they are not interested in the dispute whether historic buildings are Hindu or Muslim.

Thus the very academicians and bureaucrats who derive their sustenance from public funds are the ones who out of personal profit motives treacherously betray the pathetic trust placed in them by a doting public and continue to dish out only doctored, fraudulent 'certified' history.

This is an appalling situation. While all elders constantly sermonize their wards on telling the truth they themselves spend all their professional lives in purveying historical falsehood about the original builders of historical monuments for instance.

The conclusion whether it was Shahjahan who started raising the Taj Mahal in 1631 A.D. as a sepulchre or it was some Hindu Maharaja who had built it centuries earlier is not to be considered as a Hindu-Muslim dispute and therefore to be severely shunned. It is a question of scientific, academic competence and arriving at a correct judgment as being able to distinguish between brass and gold.

The age of the structure, its size and decor also get smudged when a building gets ascribed to anyone at-random. Bureaucrats and academicians must have the courage to disown historical falsehoods the moment they are exposed. But such dedication to the historical truth is hardly ever seen. These days considerations of mundane self-interest makes academicians and bureaucrats fling the truth out through the rear windows of their offices.

Persons not given to deep comprehensive thinking often ignorantly or out of prejudice tend to dismiss the issue about the real creator of the Taj Mahal. They argue that as over 350 years have elapsed since Shahjahan's death it matters little as to who was its real builder.

It certainly makes a lot of difference not only in one but in numerous ways.

1) Firstly estimates of the age of the building and its durability would differ.

2) Its decor displaying cobras, tridents, 'Om'-shaped flowers, lotus buds, conch-shell-type foliage, the coconut-topped pinnacle and octagonal features would be inexplicable if the Taj were taken

to be a Muslim sepulchre.

3) The absence of the term 'Taj Mahal' in Muslim court papers would have to be properly explained.

4) If any government in the world would ever want to raise an edifice rivalling the Taj Mahal would it have to approach Iran for the marble and architectural expertise ? If it does Iran would excuse itself confessing that it has neither the splendid stone nor the expert workmen.

5) Somnolent journalists often tend to publicize the repair of inlay work in the Taj Mahal, Red Fort etc. being done by Muslim craftsmen, hinting thereby that they must be of Iranian origin. That is the result of the faulty history taught to them. The artisans may be Muslim by religion today but their architectural skills devolve from their Hindu forefathers who were forced to convert during Muslim rule.

Our research has firmly established that the term Taj Mahal is a popular malpronunciation of the ancient Hindu name Tejomahalaya and that it was built centuries before Shahjahan. We have cited relevant evidence suggesting that the Taj Mahal could be the crystal-white Shiva temple built during the reign of Raja Paramardidev as evidenced by a Sanskrit inscription.

Yet we feel that more research needs to be done by opening up the thousands of sealed chambers of the several seven-storied buildings and other multi-storied edifices (such as the Nagar Khanas) to probe their hidden contents since they could yield a number of idols, inscriptions, coins, documents etc.

The name 'Temple Palace' included in the title of this volume has a spcial connotation. The term Tejomahalaya (alias Taj Mahal) that has survived generations of Muslim vandalism, its octagonal shape and the Vedic emblems that have been inlaid in it are indications that the Taj Mahal was originally planned and built as a Shiva temple consecrating Shiva's Tejoling in its octagonal sanctorum surrounded by a gem-studded gold railing.

Later when Muslim raiders from Mohammed Ghori onwards ransacked and desecrated it the magnificent Tejomahalaya continued

to be used as a palace by whosoever ruled Agra. That could be the explanation why Shahjahan's court chronicle the Badshahnama acknowledges it as 'Manzil-e-Raja Mansingh' (i. e. Raja Mansingh's mansion). Thus Raja Mansingh was the last Hindu owner in the chequered and scarred history of the Taj Mahal.

Anyway that history must be laid bare. And since the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is not only sitting tight over it but is also misleading the world of tourists and academics through its notices at the entrance to the Taj Mahal ascribing its creation as a Mogul cemetery to Shahjahan, world tourists who are charged an entrance fee to see that Taj Mahal, would do well to sue the ASI and the Govt. of India's Tourist Department too. Any citizen or body of citizens also must seek similar legal redress. The relief to be asked for from the court should be as under - 1) The ASI and the Tourist Department should be ordered to desist from attributing the origin of the Taj Mahal to Shahjahan 2) All the locked rooms in all the multi-storied buildings in the Taj Mahal complex should be open to visitors (3) The ASI should be directed to open up all the rooms in all the stories of all the buildings barred by Shahjahan with brick and lime and study the evidence that may be discovered (4) Free entry on Fridays causing a revenue loss to the Government should be discontinued because there is no mosque in the Tejomahalaya premises (5) Recitation of namaz in the west-flank building should be banned because it is the reception pavilion of a Shiva temple. (6) If free entry on Fridays is to be continued Mondays should also be free-entry days because Mondays have a special spiritual significance for Shiv worship.

I believe such legal redress could be sought by residents of other countries too in their respective courts of law. Because their scholars and tourists lured to tour India are misinformed about the real origin of the Taj Mahal and other historic buildings for all the time and travel expenses they spend and the entry fees they pay.

Until people in India and abroad take such determined steps the public cheating and fooling by Govt. agencies in India in the name of history won't stop. Envoys and foreign ministries of other

countries must also put pressure on the Government of India and news media in their respective countries to ensure that their academicians and bureaucrats are no longer dished out falsified Indian history.

P. N. Oak
Founder-President,
Institute for Rewriting World History.
Telephone (STD code 0212) 33840

Plot No. 10 Goodwill Society
Aundh, Pune 411 007, India

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هردو را از هم جدا می ساخت - و بهمین زورهای بیجا بیمار شده
پس از چندی در زندگی پدر میری شد - مقارن چون فتح خان
پسر عنبر بوسیله یمین الدوله آصفخان عرضه داشت مشعر بر
دولتخواهی و هوا جوئی فرستاده معروض داشته بود - که این
خدمت گذار اخلاص شعار بی نظام را که از کوتاه بینی و شقاوت
گزینی بدسگالی و مخالفت اولیای دولت ابد میعاد می نمود -
مقید ساخته امیدوار مراحم پادشاهی است - و در جواب آن فرمان
قضا جریان بر صدور یافته بود - که اگر گفتار او فروغ راستی دارد
جهان را از آلایش وجود بی سود او پاک گرداند - چون فتح خان
بعد از ورود حکم جهان مطاع برهان بی نظام بدفرجام را خفه نموده
شهرت داد که باجل طبیعی در گذشت - و حسین نام پسر ده ساله
او را بجا نشین آن بد آئین گرداند - و برخی واقعی مبانی از
حقیقت این واقعه بدست محمد ابراهیم که از نوکران معتمد او
بود بدرگاه سلاطین پناه فرستاد - مثال لازم الامتثال صادر شد که
اموالی را که بدرون حصار دولت آباد برده - از قلت آذوقه ضایع خواهند
شد - آن را با نفایس جواهر و مرصع آلات بی نظام همراه پسر
کلان خود برسم پیشکش ارسال نماید - تا مشمولات او بدر قبول یابد
و با منشور نوازش کهپوه مرصع و دو اسپ یکی عراقی با زین طلا
دیگری ترکی راهوار با زین مطلا مصحوب شکرالله عرب و فتح خان
بدولت آباد فرستادند - و ایلچی او بانعام چهل هزار روپیه سرافراز گردید *

روز جمعه هفدهم جمادی الاولی نعش مقدس مسافر اقلیم
تقدس حضرت مهد علیا ممتاز الزمانی را که بطریق امانت مدفون

بود مصحوب پادشاهزادهٔ نامدار محمد شاه شجاع بهادر و وزیر خان
و ستی النساء خانم که بمزاج شناسی و کاردانی بدرجهٔ اولی پیش
دستی و وکالت آن ملکهٔ جهان ملکهٔ جهانیان رسیده بود روانهٔ
دار الخلافهٔ اکبر آباد نمودند - و حکم شد که هر روز در راه آش بسیار
و دراهم و دنانیر بی شمار بفقرا و نیازمندان دهند - و زمینی در
نهایت رفعت و نزاهت که جنوب رویهٔ آن مصر جامع است - و
پیش ازین منزل راجه مانسنگه بود - و درینوقت براجه جیسنگه
نبیرهٔ او تعلق داشت - برای مدفن آن بهشت موطن برگزیدند -
اگرچه راجه جیسنگه حصول این دولت را فوز عظیم دانست - اما
از روی احتیاطی که در جمیع شئون خصوصاً امور دینیه ناگزیر است -
در عوض آن عالی منزلی از خالصهٔ شریفه باو مرحمت فرمودند
بعد از رسیدن نعش بآن شهر گرامی پانزدهم جمادی الاخری
سال آینده پیکر نورانی آن آسمانی جوهر بخاک پاک سپرده آمد
و متصدیان دار الخلافه بحکم معلی عجالة الوقت تربت انکسر تربت
آن جهان عفت را از نظر پوشیدند - و عمارتی عالیشان و گنبدی
رفیع بنیان - که تا رستخیز در بلندی یادگار همت گردون رفعت
حضرت صاحبقران ثانی باشد - و در استواری نمودار استقامت
عزایم بانی - طرح انگندند - و مهندسان دور بین و معماران صنعت
آئین چهل لک روپیه اخراجات این عمارت برآورد نمودند *

Aurangzeb's Letter (See Chapter 4)

CHAPTER 1

THE NEED TO RE-EXAMINE ANTECEDENTS

IN the city of Agra in North India, on the banks of the Yamuna, stands a beautiful, majestic building-complex known as the Taj Mahal. It is by far the biggest tourist attraction in India and one of the most renowned in the world. Three centuries of misinformed pressure-publicity has resulted in focusing visitor attention only on two cenotaphs inside the Taj Mahal to the exclusion of its other remarkable features. The result has been disastrous to a detailed study of both its history and architecture.

Until we alerted the public and governments the world over through our book titled *Taj Mahal Was A Rajput Palace*, published in 1965, it had been universally believed that the Taj Mahal originated as a Muslim tomb. The traditional universal belief of the uninformed lay visitor, based on mere hearsay, has been that the Taj Mahal owes its creation to the great amorous attachment that the fifth-generation Moghul ruler of India, Shahjahan, bore to his wife Mumtaz. On her death the disconsolate Emperor, they believe, raised the massive and spacious Taj Mahal as a monument to his love.

History students, teachers, scholars, researchers and government-officials connected with history and archaeology seem to be hardly better informed than the lay visitor. At best, history teachers and officials carry a few spurious details about the Taj Mahal story in their memory. That those details are all contradictory, counterfeit, mutually inconsistent and anomalous could be easily proved if they are collected together and placed side by side for comparison.

So many concocted accounts of the mythical Shahjahan authorship of the Taj Mahal have been afloat for the last 350 years that one wonders how they never aroused anybody's suspicion. Thus we have scholar after scholar of Indian history from almost

every part of the world rapturoulsy recounting to us how the cost of the Taj Mahal could be anything between four to ninety million rupees, the designer could be anybody from a Turk, Persian or Italian to a Frenchman, the period of construction could be anywhere between 10 and 22 years, and Mumtaz, the so-called Lady of the Taj Mahal, could have been buried in its basement or upper floor at any time from six months to nine years after her death. These are only a few absurdities, anomalies and inconsistencies of the Taj Mahal story. There are many more which we propose to expose in the following pages.

We would like to record at the very outset our wonder as to how for 350 long years people the world over believed the arrant nonsense that a stupendous and fabulous monument like the Taj Mahal could at all be raised, at least in India, to commemorate carnal love. Such puerile credulity may be all right in the mumbo-jumbo of romantic fiction but is hardly justified in the context of the hard facts of Muslim courts in mediaeval India.

Before believing in the "fabulous mausoleum" theory, two questions may be asked. Firstly, where are the historical records describing Shahjahan's romantic attachment to Mumtaz - one of his 5,000 consorts, prior to her death? Secondly, how many palaces did Shahjahan build for his sweetheart Mumtaz while she was alive before he built one over her dead body?

Histories are silent on both these points. The answer to the first is that there are no accounts of the Shahjahan Mumtaz romance because there never was any. That so called romantic attachment was a graft to justify the mythical creation of the Taj Mahal as a wonder tomb. The answer to the second question is that Shahjahan did not build any palace for Mumtaz alive or dead.

We would commend this method of asking challenging questions to oneself at every stage to ensure that one's premises are flawless before proceeding with one's research.

We would like to record emphatically here that however much it may please Western sentiment, the notion that the Taj Mahal is a marble phantom of the love that Shahjahan bore for Mumtaz, is simply silly. It never happened in mediaeval India and probably never happens anywere else in the world. Every Moghul monarch

had at least 5,000 consorts in his harem and many more at his command outside. He had hardly the time or the heart to idolise only one of his several thousand consorts.

It is a pity that in the mistaken belief of Shahjahan's love for Mumtaz, historical scholarship allowed itself to go berserk for 300 years, conjuring up fantastic details. In the process it even forgot to check-up on its facts and see that they are at least consistent with one another. The result, therefore, has been that history has been loaded with a mass of incongruent details.

Since the fictitious accounts of the Taj Mahal are legion, collecting and compiling all of them is an impossible task. Any number of such accounts could have been conjured up in any part of the world by anyone enamoured by the mythical Shahjahan legend, during the last 350 years. But we propose to present in this volume a select assortment of those fictitious accounts and prove how bogus and mutually inconsistent they are.

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CHAPTER II

ADMISSION IN SHAHJAHAN'S OWN BADSHAHNAMA

A CLEAR, unequivocal and disarming admission that the Taj Mahal is a Hindu palace commandeered for use as a Muslim tomb is contained in Shahjahan's own court chronicle written by a paid courtier named Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori.

In Elliot and Dowson[1] we are told, "*Badshahnama* of Abdul Hamid Lahori is a history of the first twenty years of the reign of Shahjahan... Abdul Hamid himself says in his preface, that the Emperor desired to find an author who could write the memories of his reign in the style of Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*. He was recommended to the Emperor for the work, and was called from Patna, where he was living in retirement, to undertake the composition." From this passage it is clear that Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori wrote the *Badshahnama* (in Persian) as an official chronicle at Emperor Shahjahan's own command. The Persian text in its original form is published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Reproduced elsewhere in this book are pages 402 and 403 of Vol. 1 of this *Badshahnama*.[2]

There are 22 lines on page 402 and 19 on page 403. We have numbered them serially so that those who cannot read the

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1. P. 3 *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians.* Vol. VII, The Posthumous Papers of the late Sir H. M. Elliot, K.C.B. edited by Professor John Dowson, M.R.A.S., published by Kitab Mahal (Private) Ltd. 56-A Zero Road, Allahabad.

2. Persian text of Mulla Abdul Hamid's *Badshahnama*, in two volumes, published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in the *Bibliotheca Indica* series. I obtained the photostat from the copy in the National Archives, Government of India, in December 1966. Copies of that publication are available in all important institutional libraries throughout the world, dealing with Indian mediaeval history.

Persian script may follow the line-by-line transcript in the Roman script and later the line-by-line rendering in English.

A TRANSCRIPT OF THE PERSIAN PASSAGE IN ROMAN CHARACTERS (PAGE 402)

1. Har do ra az ham juda mee sakht wa ba hamin zarhae' beja beemar shudah
2. Pas az chande dar zindagi e pidar sipare shud, saabiqa chun Fateh Khan
3. Pisare Ambar ba wa seelae Yaminuddoulah Asif Khan arzah dasht mebtawe bar
4. Dowlat khwahi wa hawa jooee firistadah maarooz dashta bood keh ein
5. Khidmatguzar ikhlas shiaar benizamra keh az kotah tani wa shaqawat
6. Guzeenee bad sagaali wa mukhalifate awliya-e-dowlat-e-abad meeaad mee namood
7. Muqayyad sakhteh ummidwari-i marahmi-i badshahi ast, wa dar jawabe aan farman
8. Qazah jiriyan (sic) izze sudoor yafteh hawad keh agar guftar-e-oo farooghe rastee darad
9. Jahan ra az aalaaishe wajoode besawand-e-ou pak gardanad chun Fateh Khan
10. Baad az waroode hukme jahan-mutah burhane-be-nizam bad farjam ra khufah namoodeh
11. Shoharat daad keh ba ajale tabeeyee dar guzasht, wa Hussein nam pisare Darsalae
12. Oora janashin-e-aan badaayeen gurdan need; Wa arzh dashtee mebnee az
13. Haqiqat-e-ein waqueh ba dast-e-Muhammad Ibrahim keh az nowkarane moatamade oo
14. Bood, ba dargahe salateen panah firistad muslehaimal intisal sabir shud keh
15. Iqbale ra ke ba daroone hisare Dowlatabad burdeh az

[illegible] (supplies) saayai khwahand

16. Shud aan ra ba nafais jawahar wa murasseh alat-e-be-nizam [illegible]
17. [illegible] Khood ba rasme peshkash usaal numayad ta [illegible] oo, izze qubul yabad
18. Wa ba nansboore nawazish kahpoh murassah wa da yake Iraqui ba [illegible]
19. [illegible] Turkee rah waar ba zin-e-mutalaa' mashoobe Shukrullah Arab wa Fateh Khan
20. Ba [illegible] farishtadand. Oodajiram ba benam-e-chihal hazar roopiah sarfaraz gardeedeh
21. Rooze-juma' hafdahum Jamadil awal naashe muqaddase musafire aqleeme
22. Taqaddos hazarat mehd alia Mumtazuzzamaneera keh ba tareeqae a amaanat mudafoon

(PAGE 403) :

23. Bood masahoobe Badshehzadae namadaar Muhammad Shah Shuja Bahadur a Wazir Khan.
24. Wa Sati (sic) Unnisa Khanum keh ba mijaz shanasi wa [illegible] ba dariae aolaee pesh
25. Darlee we waqaalat elaan Maalike Jahan malikae Jahaaniyaan raseeh bood, rawane-e
26. Darul khalafae Akbarabad namoodand wahukm shud keh har roz dar rah aash e bisiyar
27. Wa darahim wa dananeere be shumar ba fuqra wa nayazmadaan bibitand. wa zamine dar
28. [illegible] rifaat wa nizahat keh junoobrooe aan misr jaama' [illegible]
29. [illegible] az ein Manzil-e Rajah Mansigh bood wadaree waqt ba Rajah Jaisingh
30. [illegible] taalluq dasht taru-e-madfan e aan bashist muwattan [illegible]
31. [illegible] Raja Jaisingh husule ein dawlatra foze azeem danisht

anmah

32. Az rooe ahatiyaat keh dar jameeye ahewan khusoosan umoore diniyeh naguzir ast
33. Dar' awaz aan aali manzil-e az khalisa e sharifah badoo marahmat farmoodand
34. Baad az rasidane naash ba aan shahar-e karamat bahar panz dahum Jamadi Ussanieh
35. Sale aayandeh paikare nooranee-e aan aamaanee jowhar ba khake pak sipurdeh aamad
36. Wa mutasaddiyan-e darul khilafah ba hukme muallee ajaalatul waqt turbat-e-falak martabate
37. Aan jahan iffatra az nazar poshidand. wa *imaarate-e-aalee shaan* wa gumbaze
38. Rafi bunyan keh ta rastakheez dar balandee yadgare himmate gardoon rifaat
39. Hazrate Sahib Qarah-e-saani bashed wa dar ustuwaree namoodare istiqamat
40. Azayam banee tarah afgandand wa muhandisane doorbeen wa meamaran-e-saanat
41. Aafreen chihal lakh roopiah akharajate ein imaarat bar aawurd anmoodand

HEREUNDER IS THE LINE-BY-LINE ENGLISH RENDERING

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1. Both were separated from one another and with those unjust atrocities fell ill
2. After some time during his father's time (he) passed away. Prior to this since Fatehkhan
3. Son of Ambar through Yaminuddaulah Asafkhan had submitted a petition
4. Declaring his allegiance and loyalty and praying that this
5. Loyal servant full of sincerity requests that because the shortsightedness and cruelty
6. Ill-will and opposition of the royal officials came into play.

7. And putting me under rigorous imprisonment - and I hope to receive Royal mercy and in validity of that death-inflicting
8. Royal order.... has had the honour of being issued and if that statement has any truth in it
9. Then this world should be relieved of the existence of such a person since Fatehkhan
10. After reciving the royal order — obeyed by the world - he advanced arguments and excuses for his bad administration
11. And publicised it to appear as a natural death and Hussain named son of Darsaleh was...
12. Made successor illegally and a petition far from the
13. Reality of this event (was) sent through Mohammad Ibrahim — one of his trusted employees
14. And the court of the Protector of Kings - issued an order which had to be strictly complied with
15. That the confessor be taken inside Daulatabad fort and starved to death
16. And he with all the splendour and glory and fanfare accompanied by his son
17. Eldest (son) as per tradition be given a send off, so that his requests were accepted
18. And equipped with the gracious charter (order) and with two horses - one Iraqui with golden saddle
19. The other - Turkish with an ornamental golden saddle through Shukurullah Arab and Fatehkhan
20. Were sent to Daulatabad - and Udajahan was honoured with a reward of 40,000 rupees —
21. Friday - 15th Jamadi-ul-awwal the sacred dead body of the traveller to the kingdom of heaven, Her
22. Holiness, hazrat Mumtazul Zamani - who was buried temporarily, was sent —

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23. Accompanied by prince Mohammad Shah Shuja Bahadur, Wazir

Khan —

24. And Satiun Nisa Khanam - who knew the temperament of the (deceased) so intimately
25. And was well versed in the job and represented the views of the queen of queens etc.
26. Was brought to the capital Akbarabad (Agra) and an order was issued that very day
27. During the journey countless coins be distributed among the fakirs and needy, The site
28. covered with a majestic magnificent lush garden, to the south of that great city and
29. Amidst which (garden) the building known as the palace (Manzil) of Raja Mansingh, at present owned by Raja Jaisingh,
30. Grandson (of Mansingh), was selected for the burial of the Queen whose abode is in heaven
31. Although Raja Jaisingh valued it greatly as his ancestral heritage and property, yet he would have been agreeable to part with it gratis for the Emperor Shahjahan
32. (Still) out of sheer scrupulousness so essential in matters of bereavement and religious sanctity (thinking it improper to take his palace gratis)
33. In exchange of that (aali Manzil) *grand palace*, he (Jaisingh) was granted a piece of government land
34. After the arrival of the dead body in that great city (Agra) on 15th Jamadul Saniya.
35. Next year that illustrious body of the heavenly Queen was laid to rest
36. The officials of the capital, according to the royal orders of the day, under the sky-high lofty mausoleum
37. Hid (the body of) that pious lady from the eyes of the world, and this Palace (Imarat-e-Aalishan) so majestic and (capped) with a dome
38. So lofty that in its stature (it) is a memorial to the courage of sky-dimensions

39. (of) Sahib Qerani SANI - (the king) and in strength so mighty
40. In his resolution so firm - the foundation was laid and geometricians with far sight and architects of talent
41. Incurred an expenditure of Rs. 40 lakhs on this building.

To make this passage a little more coherent and clear we would like to explain a few points.

Emperor Shahjahan's wife Arjumand Banu died in Burhanpur somewhere between 1629 and 1632 A.D. Her body was buried in a garden there but is said to have been exhumed after about six months and transported to Agra. Even this single detail should have been enough to alert discerning and thoughtful people that Shahjahan must have come by a handy ready-made mausoleum. Why else would he disturb and remove a body well laid to rest and have it carried to Agra, 600 miles away! He wouldn't want it to be transferred from one open grave to another without some purpose. Even a commoner's body is not so trifled with, let alone that of a queen and believed to be a very 'beloved' one at that. Moreover if Shahjahan had really commisioned the Taj Mahal he should have raised it at Burhanpur where Mumtaz was already buried. Such careful checking at every stage, so essential for accurate historical research has been lacking in the field of Indian history.

The body of Mumtaz was removed (if at all) from Burhanpur only because Jaisingh's palace had by that time been commandeered for her re-burial in Agra. The site chosen for her burial in Agra had immense verdant grounds *(Subz Zamini* - as the *Badshahnama* terms it). This shows that the place had also a lush planted royal garden around Mansingh's palace. Inside those grounds was Mansingh's mansion *(manzil)* which was then in the possession of his grandson Jaisingh - says the *Badshahnama*.

It should be noted that Raja Mansingh's mansion does not necessarily mean one built by him. It only means that during Jaisingh's times it was known as Mansingh's mansion because Mansingh was its last famous occupant. That was an ancient Hindu building that had ultimately devolved on Mansingh, and then on Jaisingh. Here it must also be remembered that the Taj Mahal did not necessarily devolve on Mansingh through the direct line

of descent. Such mansions like any other piece of property changed hands by transfer, sale, gifting away, dowry, conquest or exchange. From time to time that ancient Hindu building passed into various hands and was at times under the occupation of the Muslim conquerors too as we shall explain hereafter.

On arrival in Agra, Mumtaz's body was buried underneath the dome of Mansingh's palatial mansion under royal command, says the *Badshahnama*. Earlier it tells us that though Jaisingh regarded the take-over of his highly valued ancestral palace for royal use, as a matter of great honour done to him, yet out of religious scruples it was considered fit to give him a piece of government land in exchange. It is not known whether that was a village or an open plot of land or rocky waste or a mere phantom name to adorn the record to make naked usurpation look respectable at least on paper. Actually such a piece of land does not seem to have been handed over to Jaisingh. Making confusion worse confounded historians have further assumed, baselessly, that Shahjahan too obtained an open plot of land in exchange. Why should Shahjahan exchange one plot of land for another? If he did why would he not mention the location of the plot given to Jaisingh? What is worse is that historians cite some spurious or misinterpreted documents to say that Shahjahan exchanged a group of mansions to obtain an open plot of land from Jaisingh to raise the Taj Mahal. Would a stingy, haughty Shahjahan stoop to making such an inequitable barter? Moreover the *Badshahnama* clearly asserts that it was Jaisingh who was given land while Shahjahan got Mansingh's garden palace in exchange. This is one more detail proving how the entire Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal is wholly fictitious from beginning to end.

Obviously this exchange is a mere eyewash. Who would bear with any equanimity a fabulous building being exchanged for an open piece of land? Secondly, the exchange itself sounds a mere myth because the location and dimensions of the plot of land given to Jaisingh are not mentioned. Thirdly, there was no love lost between Shahjahan, an overbearing Muslim fanatic potentate, and his nobles, especially when they were Hindus. It seems more probable that Jaisingh was just unceremoniously dispossessed of his ancestral palace.

For 350 long years humanity all over the world has been duped into believing that Shahjahan acquired a piece of open land from Jaisingh. This again should have induced some re-thinking at least amongst students of history. Why should Shahjahan, an emperor, need to beg an open plot of land from a subservient nobleman in Shahjahan's own 5-generation-old capital? Did not Shahjahan possess vast lands himself? He robbed Jaisingh of a magnificent bejewelled palace which was considered fit to bury his queen in.

The palace had a sky-high dome underneath which, the author of the *Badshanama* tells us, Mumtaz's body was hidden (i.e. buried) from the eyes of the world by the officials of the realm at Shahjahan's command. Such command again was unnecessary unless Mumtaz had to be buried in somebody else's property. The use of the word "command" is thus significant. We shall show that 104 years earlier Emperor Babur also refers to this domed palace.

This mention of the dome is of far-reaching importance to refute the false notion entrenched in Indian history and architectural and civil engineering textbooks that the dome is a Muslim form of architecture. The *Badshahnama* clearly tells us that the Hindu palace taken over for Mumtaz's burial had a dome. Incidentally the edifice is also described as a "sky-high" mansion, though those adjectives have been also interlinked with Shahjahan's courage and valour.

Since the Taj Mahal has been admitted to be a Hindu palace capped with a dome it should not be difficult to comprehend that the so-called mausoleums of Akbar at Sikandra and of Humayun and Safdarjang in Delhi, which have been often compared with the Taj Mahal are all[3] erstwhile Hindu palaces conquered and misused as Muslim tombs.

Line 40 in the above passage says that the Emperor engaged geometricians and architects for the project. This does not in the least prove that he had a mausoleum constructed from the foundation upward. Geometricians and architects were needed to plan the digging of the grave in the centre of the basement chamber and raise a

3. This point has been more fully dealt with in chapter II of my book 'Some Blunders of Indian Historical Research' published in July 1966.

cenotaph exactly over it in the centre of the octagonal throne-room on the ground floor and in the basement of the commandeered Hindu palace. The architects and geometricians were also needed to guide the removal of some marble stones, have Koranic extracts engraved on them in lettering of various sizes, depending on the height at which they were to be refixed, and to put them in position.

The words "foundation was laid" in line 40 are also self-explanatory. They are meaningful not in one but two senses. Firstly, since a corpse is always interred in a pit, filling up the ditch over the body is "laying the foundation of the grave." Secondly, it has also a figurative meaning. By burying the body in an Hindu palace, Shahjahan in a way laid the foundation of a Muslim grave. Such figurative but meaningful use of the term "laying the foundation" is not at all uncommon. One could say for instance that by his conquests Napoleon laid the foundation of the French empire. Does this mean that Napoleon ordered some digging and brick, mortar and stone for the edifice of the French empire? Similarly Shahjahan "laid the foundation" of his wife's grave by ordering some building material because he had chosen to commandeer a ready fabulous palace. It should also be noted that many Muslim chroniclers use that fraudulent term "laid the foundation" to suggest falsely that Muslim rulers built large buildings.

It is such logical and legal interpretations we would like to commend to all historians. Hitherto they have been used to gloss over inconvenient words and phrases, ignore significant passages, make fantastic assumptions, hover in a world of unreality, twist the ordinary and natural meaning of words and phrases, shut their eyes altogether to logic and legal sifting of evidence and to put pathetic faith in forgeries and falsehoods. Such slipshod and unsatisfactory methods will have to be given up if Indian history has to be rid of its many mistaken concepts and shibboleths.

About the sum of four million rupees (Rs. 40 lakh) that the *Badshahnama* tells us was expended on the building, the explanation is simple. At the outset we would like to apprise the reader of the weakness of Muslim chroniclers for exaggerating figures to boost the glory of their royal patrons. Allowing for that margin of exaggeration we may assume that the actual expenditure estimated to be expended may well have been in the neighbourhood of three

million rupees.

Thereafter we have to consider another factor. In the corruption rampant during Moghul times the estimates given to the sovereign for such projects included a large percentage of overhead, unauthorised profits of innumerable middlemen. Making due allowance for such inflated estimates we may assume that the actual expenses should have been in the nighbourhood of two million rupees.

The two million rupees (or even four million for that matter) could be easily spent on digging and filling up a grave in the basement, raising a cenotaph in the ground floor central octagonal chamber, covering them with costly mosaic of stones to match and merge with the palace flooring, barricading the hundreds of rooms, ventilators, staircases, doorways, balconies and corridors in the seven-storied marble Tejomahalaya Hindu Temple Palace complex and engraving the Koran on the walls of the edifice. The engraving necessitated raising a huge scaffolding to the towering height of the seven-storied edifice around its massive girth and its many lofty gateways and arches. Such mosaic flooring and Koranic engraving necessitated the removal of the stone pitching of the Hindu palace at places and replacing it. New stones had also to be ordered to replace those which chipped off or broke in this tampering and tinkering. Hiring of highly paid artisans, ordering of stone from great distances and raising of a costly scaffolding accounts for the expenditure mentioned by the *Badshahnama*.

We shall quote in the next chapter the French merchant visitor Tavernier to testify that the scaffolding cost much more than the entire work done. This would prove that the work done was the comparatively insignificant lettering at precarious heights on the arches of the Taj Mahal and sealing six stories.

We wonder on what authority later writers have placed the cost of the so-called construction of the Taj Mahal at anywhere

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4. P. [illegible], Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VI. It is stated, "De Sacy also mentions the exaggerated account of property and expenditure, as to the number of elephants, horses, etc. and the *cost of buildings*, and such like, in the *Memoirs* (of Jehangir) translated by Price, compared with the more moderate statements given in Anderson's extracts."

upto Rs. 90.17 million (Rs. 9 crores and 17 lakhs) when Shahjahan's own court-chronicler, Mulla Abdul Hamid, places it at only Rs. 40 lakhs (four million rupees). It is such untenable evidence, blindly admitted, by flouting rules of methodology, that has riddled Indian history with errors, of which perhaps the most monstrous concerns the origin of the Taj Mahal.

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CHAPTER III

TAVERNIER

HAVING noted in the preceding chapter that Shahjahan's own court-chronicler admits the Taj Mahal to be a domed Hindu palace commandeered for queen Mumtaz's burial, we propose to prove in this chapter that the French traveller Tavernier's testimony too fully corroborates our conclusion and proves the traditional Shahjahan legend to be baseless. Tavernier visited India during Emperor Shahjahan's time. He has left us some notes on the Taj Mahal, which should be useful in arriving at the truth about the origin of that mansion.

Before examining his testimony let us first get introduced to him. The *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* tells us[5]

"Jean Baptiste Tavernier, a French jeweller, toured India for trade between 1641 and 1668 A. D. His travel account is mainly devoted to commerce. He used to sojourn at Surat and Agra (while in India). He visited all parts of India, including Bengal, Gujarat, Punjab, Madras, Karnatak, etc. He owned a vehicle. He had to spend Rs. 600/- for the cart and pair of bullocks. 'The bullocks used to cover 40 miles a day for two months at a stretch. Four days were enough for the journey from Surat to Agra or Golconda and the expense used to be between Rs. 40/- and Rs. 50/-. The roads were as good as Roman highways. European travellers felt inconvenienced in Hindu territories for want of meat which was freely available in Muslim dominions. A good postal system was in vogue. Both the town-folk and the government used to provide

5. Pp. 13-4 Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh, Vol. 14, edited by Dr. S. V. Ketkar & Associates and published in 1925 by the Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh Mandal Ltd., from 841 Sadashiv Peth, Poona - 2 (India). 22 Volumes.

protection against highway robbery'... In the kind of information Tavernier has recorded (in his book titled *Travels in India*). Not being learned, he has not recorded much except where wealth and commerce was concerned."

In the above passage which tells us who Tavernier was, there are three points significant for our discussion. One is that Tavernier was in India sometime between 1641 and 1668 A. D. In this connection it may be remembered that Mumtaz had died sometime between 1629 and 1632. Tavernier arrived in India nearly 11 years after Mumtaz's demise. We shall quote Muslim chronicles to show that the mythical building of the Taj Mahal commenced within a few months of her death. As against that we are going to quote later that according to Tavernier the work commenced and ended during his stay in India. That is to say, according to Tavernier no work was undertaken concerning Mumtaz's tomb at least for 11 years after her death, since Tavernier arrived in India only sometime in 1641. According to some Muslim accounts which we shall quote hereafter, the Taj Mahal was complete starting from the foundations, by 1643. Readers may note this glaring inconsistency between the Muslim and Tavernier's versions. Some of the former say that the Taj Mahal was complete by 1643 while Tavernier tells us that the work concerning the mausoleum was not even begun by at least 1641. We shall quote the relevant versions later. The other point to be noted in the above quoted extract is that since Tavernier was not a scholar, his attention was concentrated primarily on wealth and commerce.

The third point is that though Tavernier was in India intermittently until 1668, Shahjahan had been deposed and incarcerated by his son Emperor Aurangzeb in 1658. That is to say, if we go by Tavernier's testimony, the work concerning Mumtaz's mausoleum commenced some time after 1641 and should have ended much before 1658 when Shahjahan became a helpless prisoner of his own son. But we shall show that Tavernier also notes that the work took 22 years to complete. That means that even if the work began in 1641 it ended only in 1663. That was impossible since Shahjahan was no longer on the throne after 1658.

Such glaring anomalies in the traditional Taj Mahal legend have

never before attracted anybody's attention. That proves that no real research has been done regarding the origin of the Taj Mahal. A long line of scholars has remained content with merely quoting the several inconsistent versions without ever trying to sort them out or reconcile them.

We shall now quote[6] the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for a more thorough acquaintance with Tavernier.

"Tavernier, Jean Baptiste (1605-1689), French traveller and pioneer of trade with India, was born in 1605 at Paris where his father Gabriel and uncle Melchines, Protestants from Antwerp, pursued the profession of geographers and engravers... His farthest point in this first journey was Isfahan. He returned by Baghdad, Aleppo to Alexandria, Malta and Italy, and was again in Paris in 1633. In Sept. 1638 he began a second journey (1638-43) by Aleppo to Persia and thence to India as far as Agra and Golconda. His visit to the court of the Great Mogul and to the diamond mines was connected with the plans realised more fully in his later voyages in which Tavernier traded in costly jewels and other precious wares, among the greatest princes of the East. The second journey was followed by four others. In his third (1643-49), he went as far as Java and returned by the Cape : in his last three voyages (1651-55, 1657-62, 1664-68) he did not proceed beyond India. In 1669 he received letters of nobility and in 1670 purchased the barony of Aubonne near Geneva.

"The closing years of Tavernier's life are obscure. He left Paris for Switzerland in 1687. In 1689 he passed through Copenhagen, on his way to Persia through Moscow and in that year he died at Moscow."

Hereafter we shall analyse Tavernier's noting about the Taj Mahal, to show how, if properly understood and interpreted it confirms our conclusion that Shahjahan did not build the Taj Mahal but only commandeered an earlier Hindu mansion to bury his wife Mumtaz in.

Even so, we would like to point out here that the undue emphasis

6. P. 896, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1964 Ed. Vol. 21.

that historians have tended to put on Tavernier's testimony is unjustifiable. In this context we would like to alert historians about the sagacious provisions of the Law of Evidence. One glaring fault of historical researchers has been that they have either been utterly ignorant or have shown complete disregard of the rules of logic and judicial evaluation of evidence. The Law of Evidence is itself based on sound logic.

If a person were to approach a court of law for a declaration that Shahjahan built the Taj Mahal, on the basis of Tavernier's testimony both the plaintiff and his plaint will be thrown out of the court.

The court will justifiably ask that if the then Government of India represented by Shahjahan does not have even a shred of paper (such as design-drawings or account sheets or an inscription) to prove his authorship of the Taj, the plaintiff has no right to claim any title to the Taj on the basis of some vague noting by a third person like Tavernier from a distant country like France who chanced to visit India during Shahjahan's reign. Tavernier's testimony will therefore be regarded as third-rate evidence by a court of law while historians have tended to regard it as first rate. This is an illustration of the much leeway that historians have to make before claiming to be competent researchers.

Even so we shall show how Tavernier's noting itself effectively pricks the bubble of the Shahjahan legend. This is but natural since all seemingly divergent details must inevitably fit in with the Truth.

This is what Tavernier has recorded[7] : "Of all the tombs which one sees at Agra that of the wife of Shahjahan is the most splendid. He purposely made it near the *Tasimacan* where all foreigners come, so that the whole world should see and admire. The *Tasimacan* is a large bazar consisting of six large courts, all surrounded with porticos under which there are chambers for the use of merchants and an enormous quantity of cotton is sold there...

7. Pp. 109-111. *Travels in India*. Vol. I, by Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne. Translated from the original French edition of 1676 with a biographical sketch of the author, notes, appendices etc., by Dr. V. Ball, LL.D. F.R.S., F.G.S. in two volumes, published by Macmillan & Co., London, 1889.

I witnessed the commencement and accomplishment of this great work on which they expended 22 years during which twenty thousand men worked incessantly. This is sufficient to enable one to realise that the cost of it has been enormous. *It is said that the scaffolding alone cost more than the entire work,* because, from want of wood, they had all to be made of brick as well as the supports of the arches. This has entailed much labour and heavy expenditure... Shahjahan began to build his own tomb on the other side of the river but the war which he had with his sons interrupted his plan."

We must examine the above passage very critically. While examining it we must also bear in mind that the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* quoted earlier has said that Tavernier not being a scholar was only attracted by wealth and commerce.

As pointed out in the earlier chapter, Mumtaz having died between 1629 and 1632, her body was first buried in Burhanpur in an open garden. After about six months (so they say) it was taken to Agra. That means Mumtaz's body was in Agra at the latest before the close of 1632 A.D. Now if we have to believe Tavernier that he saw the commencement of the work (after his arrival in India in 1641) the body of Mumtaz must have been lying in the open exposed to sun and rain for nearly a decade. Here we are also confronted with another difficulty, namely the inconsistency between his account and Muslim ones. According to Muslim accounts, the earliest date by which the Taj Mahal was complete was 1643.

We want to tell the reader that in this volume we shall not ignore even a single report or detail about the Taj Mahal story, no matter whether it is a concoction or a reliable piece. Unlike the historians before us, we shall not brush away the inconsistencies in the several accounts. In fact we welcome them to show how even falsehoods and concoctions can be logically explained and reconciled with the truth.

Muslim accounts could be right in maintaining that Mumtaz's body was brought to Agra within a few months after her death. It could only have been brought if a tomb was ready and handy. It would not be brought from its repose in the grave at Burhanpur if Shahjahan had yet to dig the very foundation of the new tomb. If he was to build a new tomb, Mumtaz's body would have been

taken to Agra for consecration in the new tomb only after a period of 12 or 13 years, which we are told by some was the time taken to build the Taj Mahal.

That the tomb was ready in the shape of a commandeered Hindu palace we have already proved by quoting earlier Shahjahan's own court chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid.

The period of six months that had to elapse before Mumtaz's body was taken to Agra from Burhanpur is explained by the time taken in scheming to confiscate the Jaipur ruler's palace in Agra under the pretext of Mumtaz's urgent re-burial in it. Since Raja Jaisingh was a vassal of the Moghuls he was brow-beaten into surrendering Taj Mahal for Moghul misuse.

On arrival in Agra, as Shahjahan's court chronicler tells us, Mumtaz's body was buried under the lofty dome of Mansingh's palace then in the possession of his grandson Jaisingh. According to that account no time was lost between the arrival of the body in Agra and its burial under the lofty Hindu domed palace. Apparently, therefore, Muslim accounts of the building of the Taj Mahal are all concoctions. We shall prove them to be so by analysing them in detail.

Having buried Mumtaz's exhumed body in the Hindu palace at Agra, Shahjahan was not in any hurry to make further changes. The workmen whose names occur in Muslim accounts are of those who dug the grave in the basement, erected a cenotaph on the ground floor, etched Koranic extracts on the walls of the Taj Mahal and on its arches and sealed six stories. To this extent the names of designers and workmen found in the various accounts may be genuine.

As for Tavernier's statement that he saw the "commencement and accomplishment of this great work" he clearly implied that the work was nothing more than framing the whole of the lofty palace inside and out in intricate scaffolding, inscribing Koranic extracts on the walls, and then dismantling the scaffolding. This is clear from his very illuminating statement that "the cost of the scaffolding itself was more than that of the entire work." Had Shahjahan constructed the Taj Mahal as we see it today it would be absurd for any visitor like Tavernier to say that the cost

of the scaffolding was more than that of the entire work. The cost of the scaffolding far from exceeding that of the building for which it is erected, is in fact infinitesimal. Contrarily, Tavernier says that the scaffolding proved costlier. That is emphatic proof that the "entire work" consisted of nothing but the comparatively insignificant engraving of the Koran, digging burial pits and erecting a grave and a cenotaph. We thus see how all inconsistencies and even concoctions can be explained away with the help of the truth.

As for Muslim accounts being concoctions, we have a long line of eminent historians like the late Sir H. M. Elliot[8], Dr. Tessitori and Dr. S. N. Sen[9] to tell us that those accounts must not be relied upon.

If Shahjahan "purposely made the tomb near the bazar called *Tasimacan where all foreigners come, so that the whole world should see and admire it,*" the question that arises is whether a reportedly inconsolably grief-stricken Shahjahan would find a sheltered, quiet spot for his wife's tomb, if he really built one, or whether he would behave like a cheap itinerant entertainer? Was he in the show business to want to rig up a big show out of even his wife's death and play to the gallery?

It is no wonder that even the insignificant engravings on a commandeered Hindu palace should take 10, 12, 13, 17 or 22 years, as alleged in different accounts, because far from the prodigal Moghul that Shahjahan is made out to be, he was a very miserly, haughty, overbearing monarch. Even otherwise no Muslim monarch could afford to spend fabulous amounts on the death of each one of his 5,000 harem-consorts and many hundreds of other relations.

Moreover, the time taken in construction is immaterial because once Mumtaz's body was safely ensconced under the dome of the

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8. Elliot & Dowson, 8-volume *History*. In the preface Sir H. M. Elliot observes : The history of the Muslim era in India "is an impudent and interested fraud."

9. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Allahabad Session, 1938. In his address as Sectional President, Dr. S. N. Sen, quoting the Italian scholar Dr. Tessitori, agreed with him that the Muslim chroniclers are highly unreliable and must never be taken at their word without corroboration.

lofty and majestic Hindu palace, what did it matter whether the engravings took anything from 13 to 22 years? Even the very uncertainty of the periods mentioned in the numerous versions is in itself plausible evidence because we know from experience that when a usurped building is to be altered to one's satisfaction such alterations could be spasmodically incorporated, over a protracted period, in the building, according to the changing mood of the new occupant. In this sense we say that all the periods, from 10 to 22 years, mentioned by the different chroniclers may be taken to be true. Reconciling these versions we may say that the tomb mound and the cenotaph mosaic of Mumtaz took 10 years (because that is the shortest period mentioned by any writer). The Koranic engravings dragged on for 22 years. Camouflaging Hindu buildings with Muslim lettering was not Shahjahan's innovation. It had a hoary tradition. The Adhai-Din-Ka-Zopda at Ajmer, which was a part of Vigraharaj Vishaldeo's palace, bears Islamic lettering. The so-called Kutub Minar which is an ancient Hindu observatory tower has also been similarly claimed for Islam with the legerdemain of Islamic carvings on it. The so-called Humayun, Safdarjang and Akbar tombs, though earlier Rajput palaces, have met with the same fate. It is no wonder if Shahjahan carried forward this well-worn tradition of his forbears and with a masterstroke of imperial highhandedness robbed Jaisingh of his fabulous ancestral palace, which was Shahjahan's maternal home. He had a twin objective in turning a gay Hindu palace into a weird Muslim tomb. One was to further impoverish and humiliate a Hindu princely house, and the other, to appropriate the whole palace with its fabulous wealth like pearl pendants, gold pitcher and railings, silver doors and the famous Peacock Throne (which was in this palace) to his own treasury.

We would also like to draw the reader's attention to Tavernier's words, "Shahjahan purposely made the tomb near the *Tasimacan* (which had six large courts) where all foreigners come, so that the whole world should see and admire it." The word *Tasimacan* is *Taz-i-macan*, i.e. royal residence, which is synonymous with Taj Mahal. That is to say, the Hindu palace was known as *Tasimacan* alias Taj Mahal even before Mumtaz's burial, according to Tavernier. He also tells us that foreigners used to flock to see that magnificent

palace and that Shahjahan's object in burying Mumtaz there was precisely to cash in on the sculptural grandeur of that dreamland palace.

Shahjahan is often misrepresented in Indian histories as a fabulously rich Moghul. This image of his derives from the belief that he built a number of costly buildings while he actually did not build even a single. Far from being a monarch possessing fabulous wealth Shahjahan could hardly command any resources worth the name because his near - 30 - year reign was marred by 48 military campaigns. Shahjahan's relative poverty is fully borne out by Tavernier's remark quoted above that from "want of wood" the scaffolding, including the support of arches, had all to be made of bricks. The reader may well consider whether a monarch who cannot muster even the timber necessary for a scaffolding, in a country like India which had vast stretches under dense forest, can ever hope or dream of ordering a building as magnificent and majestic as the Taj Mahal?

Tavernier's remark that Shahjahan had to use bricks even to support arches is of special significance. It means that the "arches" existed already. It may be noted that Koranic engravings on the Taj Mahal are made around the arches. When the original stone slabs were removed by Shahjahan and were substituted by other slabs with the Muslim lettering, the arches so tampered with had to be supported with bricks. So this part of Tavernier's observation also proves that the Taj Mahal with its arched entrances existed even before Mumtaz's death.

When Tavernier says the *Tasimacan* (i.e. *Taz-i-Macan*) is a large bazar consisting of six large courts he is obviously describing the specious red stone pavilions around, excluding the marble building, since it had already been appropriated for Mumtaz's burial. In fact Tavernier's account may appear confusing, because while the whole world designates the marble building as the "Taj Mahal" Tavernier calls the peripheral red-stone buildings as "*Taz-i-Macan*." The fact is that both the marble building and the surrounding red-stone shopping corridors constitute the "*Taz-i-Macan*", i.e. "crown property" belonging to Jaisingh. It was that entire property - the majestic magnificent marble palace

with all its annexes - that was commandeered by Shahjahan. The red-stone corridors would have no *locus standi* there without the central marble building since they are mere adjuncts of a temple palace.

Before we end this chapter, however, we want to caution the reader about the worth of Western scholars' or visitors' testimony. During British rule in India there was a strong tendency to place great store by the jottings of Western observers. That tendency persists even now though we are free. But Keene, himself an English scholar, has made some important observations, which provide a classic instance of confused minds.

In a footnote on page 154 of his book, Keene observes, "Tavernier commenced his first voyage in 1631 and after travelling from Constantinople to Ispahan in Persia, returned to France in 1633. He did not, therefore, see the commencement of the Taj but he may have heard of it at Ispahan. His fourth voyage from 1651 to 1655 was to India, and it was then that he saw the completion of the Taj."

Firstly let us tell Keene how Tavernier is right. Keene does not know that since the Taj Mahal was a Hindu mansion there was nothing for Shahjahan to do except to dig a trench in its basement central chamber, if at all, and bury the corpse of Mumtaz there. Therefore Tavernier need not have been in India in 1630-31 to witness the "commencement". What Tavernier means by saying that he saw the commencement and end of the building work, is, as already explained by us, that he saw Shahjahan's labourers erect a scaffolding to inlay Koranic engravings at various heights of the Taj Mahal? This work could begin and end at any time, and if it began and ended while Tavernier was in India there is nothing surprising. Tavernier is therefore right.

But one interesting fact which emerges from Keene's footnote is that nobody seems to know for certain as to when Tavernier was in India and for how long? While we have quoted the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* to imply that Tavernier lived in India intermittently from 1641 to 1668, Keene states that Tavernier could be in India only sometime between the years 1651-1655. On the other hand, Encyclopaedia Britannica states that Tavernier was in

India several times intermittently. This indicates that Tavernier is not very reliable. All that he has stated is not the truth or the whole truth. If he was in India for less than four years (between 1651-1655 including the months covered by the voyage to and fro) would it be right for him to say that "20,000 labourers worked incessantly for 22 years and that the work commenced and ended in my presence"? This indicates that Tavernier too has bluffed the world of history regarding the Taj Mahal by recording Muslim bluffs which he only heard but passed on to posterity as first hand information.

Tavernier's noting makes out four specific points, namely : 1. That Shahjahan purposely buried Mumtaz near a bazar known as Tasimacan (i.e. Taj Mahal). 2. That he could not get any timber for the scaffolding. 3. That the cost of the scaffolding was more than that of the entire work. 4. That 20,000 labourers worked incessantly for 22 years.

Of the above the first three points clearly imply that Shahjahan took over a ready Taj Mahal for Mumtaz's burial. The fourth point on which traditional historians have banked does not make any sense when it is considered that a Tavernier staying in India only for four years (1651-1655) cannot assert that the work which began and ended in his presence lasted for 22 years.

But Tavernier's apparently absurd statement makes sense if it is properly interpreted and understood. When he arrived in India in 1651 Mumtaz had already been buried in the Taj Mahal for 20 years. The work of raising a scaffolding around the Taj and engraving Koranic stanzas then commenced and ended while Tavernier was in India. If that took two years Tavernier's observation that Mumtaz's tomb was by that time 22 years old and the work (of the scaffolding and engraving) began and ended in his presence proves to be singularly correct. So even this fourth point of Tavernier's testimony which was suspected to support Shahjahan's authorship of the Taj, turns out to support our contention that Shahjahan only usurped the Taj Mahal.

Tavernier's observation that because of the unavailability of timber Shahjahan had to erect a scaffolding of bricks all round the Taj, and that the work was completed after 22 years indicates

that the whole of the marble Taj Mahal building which we see today was curtained off from public view for 22 long years by a wall of bricks used as scaffolding. That is to say the Taj Mahal lay hidden from the world for one whole generation. It is but natural that after a lapse of 22 years when the brick - scaffolding was dismantled and the Taj Mahal came into view once again, the new generation started beliveing that it was Shahjahan who had commissioned it.

It was because of that brick shroud that we find gullible Western visitors like Peter Mundy and Tavernier making uninformed, confused and sketchy notings about Shahjahan being engaged in building a tomb for Mumtaz and his employing of all people mainly only calligraphers, and labourers to level the hillocks on the outskirts. The skill of a historian researcher like that of a crime investigator lies in getting at the truth from such a jumbled mass of incongruous details. Fortunately in the case of the Taj Mahal various contemporary observers have left us very important clues which help us point out unerringly that the marble Taj Mahal was commandeered by Shahjahan and misused as a mausoleum.

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CHAPTER IV

AURANGZEB'S LETTER AND RECENT EXCAVATION

In addition to the admission in the Badshahnama that the Taj Mahal is a commandeered Hindu mansion, and Tavernier's noting that the Taj mansion was "purposely" chosen by Shahjahan for Mumtaz's burial, we have two other pieces of important corroborative evidence. One is a letter written by Prince Aurangzeb himself to his own father emperor Shahjahan, and the other of facts discovered in recent investigations inside the Taj Mahal precincts.

Universities, academicians and laymen who have been vociferously and adamantly asserting that Shahjahan built the Taj Mahal, are unaware that they are all hopelessly divided on the various details of the story. For instance Mumtaz, the heroine of the story is variously hazily believed to have died somewhere between 1629 and 1632 A. D. Likewise the construction of the Taj Mahal by Shahjahan (?) is equally hazily believed to have taken anywhere between 10 and 22 years. During the British administration in India the tendency had been to place more reliance on the noting of a Westerner when records differed. Accordingly the British administration in India took it for granted that the mumbo jumbo of Tavernier's mumble that the work concerning Mumtaz's burial took 22 years deserved more credence to the exclusion of all Muslim accounts. It apparently did not enter their brains that since Tavernier and Muslim versions all differed radically from one another with neither being able to cite any court document, they must all be false. Therefore somehow the British accepted a hodgepodge version of the Taj Mahal, made up of spurious details culled at random from European and Muslim accounts. Such an hybrid concoction put up on a marble plaque outside the Taj Mahal's garden gateway proclaims to the gullible lay visitors that the Taj Mahal was completed in 22 years. That the Government of India's archaeology department

which has drafted the plaque on the advice of so-called expert historians should blunderingly mislead the whole world on the authorship of a world-class monument is highly deplorable.

If then Mumtaz is taken to have died around 1631 as is commonly believed, the period of 22 years gives us 1653 A. D. as the year in which the Taj Mahal stood completed spick and span, massive and firm in all its grandeur and majesty. But as the ill-luck of the Archaeology department and the traditionalist historians would have it, we have on record a letter from Prince Aurangzeb, of a year earlier i.e. of 1652 A. D., scotching that claim. That letter is recorded in at least three contemporary Persian chronicles titled Adaab-e-Alamgiri (p. 82 of the manuscript with the National Archives, New Delhi), Muraqqa-e-Akbarabadi, and Yaadgaarnama. In that Aurangzeb reports to Emperor Shahjahan that while proceeding from Delhi en route to the Deccan to assume charge as governor in 1652 A. D. Aurangzeb happened to visit his mother Mumtaz's burial place in Agra.

Paying due compliments and respects to his father Emperor Shahjahan, Aurangzeb states in his letter "I reached (Akbarabad, i.e. Agra) on Thursday, the 3rd of Moharam Mukram. On arrival I called on Badshahzada Jahanbani (i.e. the elder Prince Dara) in the garden of Jahanara. In that splendourous house surrounded by springtime verdure I enjoyed their company and inquired about everybody's well-being. I stayed in the garden of Mahabat Khan.

"Next day it being a Friday, I went to pay my homage to the sacred grave which had been laid in Your Majesty's presence. Those (i.e. cenotaph, grave etc.) are in good shape, strong and solid but the dome over the grave leaks at two or three places during the rainy - season on the northern side. Similarly several royal rooms on the second storey, and the four smaller cupolas and the four northern portions and the secret rooms and the tops of the seven storey ceilings and the jamposh of the bigger dome have all asborbed water through seepage and drip water during the current monsoon season at several places. All these I have got temporarily repaired.

"But I wonder what will happen to the various domes, the mosque, the community hall, etc. during subsequent rainy seasons.

They all need more elaborate repairs. I feel that the second storey roof needs to be opened up and re-done with mortar, brick and stone. Repairs to the smaller and bigger domes would save these palatial buildings from decadence. It is hoped that Your Majesty will look into the matter and order necessary action.

"The Mehtab garden is innundated and looks desolate. Its scenic beauty will reappear only when the floods recede.

"That the rear portion of the building complex remains safe is a mystery. The stream keeping away from the rear wall has prevented damage.

"On Saturday too I visited the spot and then I called on the Prince (Dara) who also paid me a return visit. Then taking leave of all I resumed my journey (to take charge as governor of the Deccan) on Sunday and today the 8th instant I am in the vicinity of Dholpur..."

Thus from Aurangzeb's noting it is apparent that in 1652 A.D. itself the Taj Mahal building complex had become so ancient that it needed elaborate repairs. So what was carried out in 1652 A. D. was not the completion of a new building but the repairs to an old building complex. Had the Taj Mahal been a building completed in 1653 it would not have fallen to the lot of a chance, lone visitor like Aurangzeb to notice the defects and order repairs in 1652. The defects should have been noticed by the thousands of workmen and hundreds of court supervisors who were supposed to be builidng the Taj Mahal. And since such serious defects had been in fact noticed a year before completion all the tom-tomming of the "master-builders" of the Taj is utterly unjustified. The builders of the Taj were no doubt master-craftsmen but they were not Shahjahan's contemporaries but Hindus of several centuries earlier. Similarly it was not Shahjahan who commissioned the Taj Mahal but some ancient Hindu king. Likewise the Taj did not come into being as an Islamic mausoleum but as a Hindu temple - palace.

Another very significant point which emerges from Aurangzeb's letter is that had the Taj really been completed in 1653 A. D. the principal workmen would have been hanged by the nearest tree in the Taj garden for having wasted millions of rupees of the Moghul treasury and insulted the memory of the deceased queen by raising

a building complex which leaked and cracked even a year before its (fictitious) completion. Aurangzeb who is a byword for cruelty and tyranny, would have thundered anathema against those workers, in his letter to Emperor Shahjahan. Instead we hear him cooing like a dove and coolly mentioning that he was constrained to carry out some urgent repairs. At least this letter of Aurangzeb should help historians to correct their mistaken notions about the origin of the Taj Mahal.

In his letter Aurangzeb refers to the garden of the Taj Mahal as Mahatab garden, i.e. a Moon Garden. From this we conclude that the original Sanskrit name of the garden surrounding the Taj Mahal alias Tejo-Maha-Alaya must have been Chandra Udyan. We derive this conclusion from our research observation that Muslim invaders used to translate contemporary Sanskrit terms into Persian after seizure of premises or persons. The concept of viewing the Taj in moonlight is, therefore, obviously of Hindu, pre-Shahjahan origin.

Another noteworthy point in Aurangzeb's letter is that he confesses to a sense of mystery and wonder that while the garden seemed all flooded and the nearby Yamuna river was in high spate its stream yet flowed quite a respectable distance away from the rear wall of the Taj. We have also observed in our own day that even at the peak of the rainy-season when one sees nothing but a sheet of water everywhere the Yamuna still flows about 100 feet away from the Taj wall.

Had Aurangzeb's father Shahjahan commissioned the Taj Mahal the secret of the Yamuna stream keeping away from the Taj wall shouldn't have been a mystery to Aurangzeb because the court builders, if any, would have easily explained the secret to Aurangzeb. But apparently Aurangzeb's sense of wonderment was shared by the entire Moghul court. They must have all been puzzled about what made the Yamuna current confine itself to a specific, well regulated channel away from the rear wall of The Taj building-complex. The secret lies in the foresight and technical skill of the ancient Hindu builders of the Taj Mahal alias Tejo-Maha-Alaya temple palace, who, well aware that they were undertaking masonry construction of massive proportions near a major river, sunk deep

bastion-like wells on either side of the Yamuna bank to contain
the stream even at peak flow levels and carry the water swiftly
ahead. Moreover the Yamuna-current has been so channelized not
only near the Taj but all along its course through Agra city because
the Red Fort in Agra, the Taj and several other ancient Hindu
royal mansions, now unfortunately masquerading as Muslim tombs
in the name of Itimad Uddaulah, etc., all abut on the Yamuna.
In fact throughout India it has been a hoary practice with the Hindus
to build forts, palaces, mansions and temples on seashores, lake-sides
and river banks. The famous temple of Somnath on the Kutch
seashore and the magnificent bathing ghats topped with massive
temples and mansions along the Ganga in Varanasi are typical
examples. Because of that penchant of the Hindus to erect buildings
near streams of water Hindus had perfected the technique of
preventing erosion and flooding. Muslims, besides being engrossed
only in massacre and plunder were mostly uneducated and were
unused to building near expanses of water or by the side of swift
currents because of their desert tradition. Contrarily the Hindus
always created water reservoirs where there were none before starting
major building projects. As illustrations we cite vast lakes constructed
by the Hindus in Ajmer (e.g. the Annasagar) and Fatehpur Sikri.
The latter got drained away during Akbar's time because Muslim
occupiers of Fatehpur Sikri didn't have the knowhow even to maintain
the bunds of that vast lake. The bursting and drying up of that
lake made Akbar abandon Fatehpur Sikri after about 15 years' stay
in a captured Hindu Fatehpur Sikri. Readers who may be believing
that it was Akbar who had founded Fatehpur Sikri may read the
author's book "Fatehpur Sikri is a Hindu city". Aurangzeb also
alludes to secret rooms and royal rooms in the Taj mahal.

The other important piece of evidence arises from some chance
digging conducted in the garden in front of the marble edifice early
in the year 1973 A. D. It so happened that the fountains developed
some defect. It was therefore thought advisable to inspect the main
pipe that lay imbedded underneath. When the ground was dug to
that level some hollows were noticed going down to another five
feet. Therefore the ground was dug to that depth. And to the
utter surprise of all there lay at that depth another set of fountains
hitherto unknown. What appeared more significant was that those

fountains are aligned to the Taj Mahal, decisively indicating that
the present building existed even before Shahjahan. Those hidden
fountains could have been installed neither by Shahjahan nor his
successors, the British. Therefore they were of the pre-Shajahan
era. Since they were aligned to the Taj Mahal building it followed
ipso facto that the building too pre-dated Shahjahan. This piece
of evidence too therefore clinches the issue in favour of our conclusion
that Shahjahan only commandeered an ancient Hindu temple-palace
for Mumtaz's burial.

The archaeology officer who supervised that digging was Mr.
R. S. Verma, a conservation assistant. This same official made
another chance discovery. Once while strolling staff-in-hand on the
terrace near the so-called mosque and the circular well on the western
flank of the marble edifice, Mr. Verma detected a hollow sound
coming from below the floor where his staff hit the terrace. He
had a slab covering that spot removed and to his surprise that
was an ancient opening, apparently sealed by Shahjahan, to a flight
of about 50 steps reaching down into a dark corridor. The broad
wall under the terrace was apparently hollow. From this it is clear
that the corresponding spot on the eastern terrace also hides a
similar staircase and corridor, at its bottom. And God only knows
how many more such walls, apartments and stories lie sealed, hidden
and unknown to the world. This also incidentally points to the
sorry state of research with respect to the Taj Mahal. Nobody seems
to have done either any archaeological investigation in the grounds
of the Taj Mahal nor conducted a diligent academic study of the
whole issue. Apparently extraneous political and communal
considerations have inhibited historians and archaeologists from
conducting any meaningful research into the origin of the Taj Mahal.
Such academic cowardice is highly reprehensible.

Several leading authorities on architecture and history like E.
B. Havell have held that the Taj Mahal is absolutely Hindu in design.
Our research has proved that the Taj Mahal is singularly Hindu
in conception and execution and that it was built several centuries
before the Moghul emperor Shahjahan by Hindus as a temple-palace
complex. That Hindus alone possess the genius to conceive the
Taj Mahal and the skill to build and maintain it in good repair
was borne out by a comparatively recent incident. That episode

was described in an article contributed by Mr. Gulabrao Jagdeesh in the widely circulated Marathi daily, the Lokasatta (published from Bombay) dated May 27, 1973.

According to the writer of that article, Mr. Jagdeesh, early in the year 1939 a British engineer entrusted with the supervision of the Taj Mahal noticed a crack in its dome. He tried to repair the crack but failed. He then brought the crack to the notice of his superiors but they too fared no better. As the days passed the crack appeared to grow wider and longer. A committee of engineers was appointed to heal the crack but the committee's efforts too met with no success. Some urgent action was necessary lest the crack widen and the dome crumble.

While the authorities were in a fix, a rustic-looking Hindu approached them. His name was Puranchand. He told the superintending engineer that he possessed the knowhow to heal the crack and wished to be given a chance. Since so-called modern, bookish engineering expertise had failed, the British engineer reluctantly consented to let the rustic have a go. In doing so the engineer had his own reservations. He could have the last laugh, he thought.

Puranchand set to work with a group of masons to assist him. He prepared some kind of a lime concrete and personally filled it up in the crack. The mixture hardened and integrated itself with the dome-structure so well that within a few days there was not the slightest trace of the crack.

This skill of an obscure Hindu mason which had scored over the classroom erudition of the British engineers became the talk of the British bureaucracy in India and reached the ears of the then Viceroy.

The Viceroy expressed surprise that an almost unlettered Hindu mason could beat all his engineers. This hurt the ego of the departmental authorities who had till then toyed with the idea of employing Puranchand as maintenance supervisor in the archaeological department. The Viceroy's praise had made the engineers jealous of Puranchand. They were now determined to keep him out of the department. He was refused any employment. In September 1939 began World War II and the Taj Mahal and its maintenance-problems seemed to recede in the background.

In 1942 a Hindu leader, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, was appointed member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and was put in charge of Labour. Puranchand saw a new hope in that appointment. In broken Hindi, Puranchand scribbled a letter to Dr. Ambedkar about his frustration. The letter made it clear that it was not so much the remuneration as the ambition and satisfaction of tenderly tending a stately national heritage and keeping it in fine trim for future generations which impelled Puranchand to ask for the privilege of employment in the upkeep of the Taj Mahal.

Dr. Ambedkar was moved by Puranchand's earnestness. The former introduced Puranchand to the then Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow. While informing the Viceroy that he intended to employ Puranchand as an assistant engineer on the repair of historic buildings, Dr. Ambedkar also recommended him for some national honour. The Viceroy agreed and conferred on Puranchand the title "Raisaheb".

All this is on record, assures the writer of the article, Mr. Gulabrao Jagdeesh.

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CHAPTER V

PETER MUNDY'S EVIDENCE

Peter Mundy, an English traveller, was in India from 1628 to 1633. In his diary now published under the title "Travels in Europe and Asia, 1608 - 1667", (edited by R. C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, 5 volumes, 1907 - 1936, on page 213 of Vol. II) Mundy observes "There is already about her tomb a rail of gold. The building is begun and goes on with excessive labour and cost, prosecuted with extraordinary diligence, gold and silver esteemed common metal and marble but as ordinary stones. (Shahjahan) intends, as some think, to remove all the city hither, causing hills to be made level because they might not hinder the prospect of it...

This is a very significant passage and yet highly misleading. The havoc that such haphazard notings of contemporary Western travellers like the Englishman Peter Mundy and the Frenchman Tavernier have wrought in the field of historical research, is apparent from the fact that those notings are equally carelessly flaunted as unimpeachable contemporary evidence of the Taj Mahal having been built by Shahjahan.

We propose to analyse the above passage and show how Mundy's noting too supports our research-finding that the Taj Mahal is an earlier temple-palace commandeered by Shahjahan for misuse as a mausoleum.

Incidentally our analysis should also serve as an illustration of how such snares could be successfuly tackled by researchers with a little diligence and caution.

Firstly let us note that Mundy was in India only upto 1633. Mumtaz is said to have died somewhere between 1629 and 1632. That is to say Mundy was in India only for a couple of years after Mumtaz's death. So short a period would be insufficient even to dig the foundation of the vast Taj building complex. Even the

digging of the foundation in such close proximity of the river cannot start unless water seepage from the river into the building site is first effectively prevented with strong masonry wells-cum-bastions which have been sunk between the rear wall and the river bank by the ancient builders of the Taj Hindu temple-palace complex.

And yet even within those short two years Mundy mentions a gold palisade studded with gems valued at six hundred thousand rupees.

Readers and researchers may well ponder over the fact whether such fabulous wealth could be left in the open with thousands of indigent labourers working around and the dust of the massive digging filling and fouling the atmosphere? Are such costly and scintillating fixtures and furnishings installed after a building is complete or even when the foundation-digging starts? That such valuable and resplendent fixtures were seen by Mundy around the grave of Mumtaz within a year or two of Mumtaz's death is a clear indication that Munday had stepped under the dome and inside the building of the Taj as we see it today. That such a building is implied within a year or two of Mumtaz's death clearly indicates that Shahjahan had seized an ancient Hindu temple-palace as is unequivocally admitted on page 403, Vol. 1, of Shahjahan's own court chronicle, the Badshahnama.

Then the question arises as to what is the building work that Mundy mentions. To this also Mundy gives us unmistakable clues. Since Shahjahan had seized an ancient Hindu building complex he had to give it some semblance of an Islamic mausoleum. Such architectural forgery involved the removal of Sanskrit inscriptions and Hindu idols and the substitution of Koranic verses in their place. We have also noticed from Aurangzeb's letter that all the buildings in the premises, being worn out and old, were leaking. These had also to be repaired. The Arabic "Allah" had to be overwritten at several places in buildings to the east and west of the central, domed, marble edifice. All this needed massive scaffolding to be raised to a great height around the buildings. That is why Tavernier very pertinently noted that "the cost of the scaffolding was much more than that of the entire work."

Naturally when chance alien visitors like Peter Mundy visit such

sites undergoing extensive superficial changes his observing that
''the building is begun... (and) is prosecuted with extraordinary
diligence'' is not wrong. He couldn't visualise that some generations
after him posterity would be bluffed into believing that the Taj
Mahal complex was raised by Shahjahan himself. Tavernier and
Peter Mundy could not possibly visualise such a falsification of
history and could not therefore be more explicit. We ourselves visiting
some building as chance visitors wouldn't be more explicit. For
instance if we were to visit Bombay or London at a time when
somebody has acquired somebody else's mansion and has enclosed
it in massive scaffolding to renovate it for his own purpose we
won't dare or care to ask him how he acquired the building, for
how much, from whom, what changes he proposed to make, and
spend how much over it. We would simply refer to it as his building.
Such inquiries are all the more impossible when a wide hiatus of
language, race, culture, authority and wealth separates the two.

Firstly it must be remembered that Peter Mundy and Tavernier
or for that matter any Western visitors to ancient or mediaeval
India were not researchers. They were chance visitors in a hurry.
Moreover they were poor indigent travellers who could not
communicate intensively or on equal terms with Mogul monarchs
and courtiers. The alien visitors were completely at the mercy of
the cruel Mogul court for their sustenance, for favours, for
permission to visit royal precincts, for the amount of information
they could solicit or expect to get, and for the interpretation of
the information imparted in Persian.

Under such circumstances it is for modern research scholars
to bring to bear their investigative acumen on chance notings of
visitors to mediaeval or ancient India. Modern scholars have betrayed
a woeful ineptitude in this primary quality of a researcher. Proving
very gullible they tend to clutch at superficial connotations without
bothering to interpret them in the context of the times and
circumstances in which those observations were made. For instance,
in the case of Peter Mundy the most important fact is that he
was in India only for a couple of years after Mumtaz's death and
within that short while he talks of very costly fixtures around the
tomb.

Another very significant observation of Peter Mundy is about
Shahjahan levelling the hillocks on the Taj peripheri. In spite of
Shahjahan's levelling of some hillocks visitors to the Taj may observe
more still remaining on either side of the road as they approach
the Taj. Those are all artificial hillocks raised out of the very earth
excavated when digging the foundation of the extensive temple-palace
complex by the ancient Hindus. This was a very common practice.
For instance the ancient township of Bharatpur has a moat around
it. The earth dug out for making the moat was heaped up along
the interior to serve as a barrier and defence work. The same
was the case with the Taj Hindu temple-palace. Hillocks were raised
artificially out of the earth dug from the foundation trenches on
the periphery to serve three purposes, namely a nearby dumping
ground for the earth, a landscape garden with hillocks covered with
greenery, and as a defence outwork to prevent enemy formations
from approaching the Taj in solid array.

Peter Mundy's noting about the levelling of the hillocks to the
exclusion of the mention of other activity is clearly indicative of
the fact that such levelling of some hillocks was the principal thing
that Shahjahan did in the eyes of contemporary observers. How
else will such an insignificant and inconsequential detail find mention
in Peter Mundy's brief noting about the Taj Mahal? Had Shahjahan
really built the Taj Mahal what would have compelled the notice
of visitors like Tavernier and Bernier would have been the extensive
trenches dug, wells-cum-bastions sunk at the rear flank to prevent
river water from flooding the site and the way large slabs of stone
were fashioned and hauled to great heights. The Taj Mahal is a
seven-storied structure consisting of several quadrangles comprising
over 1000 rooms. The entire building complex is surrounded with
a massive wall provided with spiked gateways. Omitting to mention
the raising of any of these, Mundy only mentions the levelling
of hillocks. Why?

Peter Mundy also fortunately records the object of the levelling
up of the hillocks. The hillocks were removed, he says, ''because
they might not hinder the prospect'' of the mausoleum. The very
fact that within a couple of years of Mumtaz's death the hillocks
were levelled to afford a glimpse of the mausoleum clearly indicates
that the Taj building complex already existed. All that was necessary

was to level some of the hillocks and make the buildings visible from a distance. In fact the very object of the ancient Hindu builders of the Taj raising those hillocks seems, from Mundy's noting, to prevent the tempting Taj to be the target of a malicious enemy's attack. Since Shahjahan was converting it into a tomb open to all and sundry, he no longer had the need to keep it out of the gaze of inimical people.

We may add here that even the gem-studded palisade and silver and gold worth several hundred thousand rupees was Hindu wealth. In fact the main object in taking over the Taj was to misappropriate that wealth. Had Shahjahan erected the gold railing, history would have recorded as to who removed it and with what authority when Shahjahan's own descendants continued to rule Delhi and Agra for over two centuries after him. Mumtaz's burial in the Taj was only an insignificant part of the game. Her cenotaph was meant to be a permanent religious scarecrow to prevent the Hindus from ever reclaiming and re-using that ancient temple-palace. What Shahjahan did was to bury Mumtaz in the sacred spot where the Hindu deity had been consecrated. This done, visitors like Peter Mundy and Tavernier were called in for a ringside view. Chauvinistic Muslim courtiers kept such alien non-Muslim visitors completely in the dark about the misappropriation of the Taj. Even otherwise it has been common and hoary Muslim practice during mediaeval conquests to grab other people's wives and wealth and proceed to deal with them as their own property. That is how whole cities like Varanasi, Delhi and Agra find an obstinate mention in mediaeval Islamic chronicles only as Mohammadabad, Shahjahanbad and Akbarabad respectively. It was a penchant with the mediaeval Muslim court to treat Hindusthan as a hinterland of Afghanistan, Persia and Arabia and give everything a Muslim colour so as to obliterate its Hindu origin. The seizure and the transformation of the Taj Mahal was a link in that forged evil chain.

Waldemar Hansen notes on pages 181-182 of his book (titled "The Peacock Throne", published by Holt, Rhinehart and Winston) that "Even as early as 1632 on the first anniversary of Mumtaz Mahal's death, the courtyard of the mausoleum in progress had been adorned with superb tents, with the entire court assembled in gay homage ... princes of the royal blood, grandees, and an

assemblage of religious scholars including sheikhs, ulemas and hafizes who knew the whole Koran by heart. Shahjahan had graced the event with his presence, and as the empress's father, Asaf Khan was present by imperial request, a great banquet was spread before the then nascent tomb, and guests partook of a variety of foods, sweetmeats and fruits. Verses from the Koran filled the air, prayers were offered for the soul of the dead and a hundred thousand rupees went in charity. In later years on other anniversary days, Shahjahan attended memorials at the incomplete edifice whenever in Agra, formally accompanied by Jahanara and the harem. The ladies always occupied a central platform set up for the occasion, and remained concealed from public gaze by kanats, screens of red cloth and velvet. Noblemen gathered under pitched tents."

We wish to make several observations regarding the above extract. Firstly, Hansen and others are wrong in calling the lady Mumtaz Mahal. Her name as given in the Badshahnama is Mumtaz-ul-Zamani. That Mahal suffix is a subsequent Muslim forgery to aliterate somehow with the ancient Hindu term Tejo-Maha-Alaya alias the Taj Mahal.

Secondly, the fact that from the very first year Mumtaz's death anniversaries were held at the spot with great eclat and ceremony shows that it was not a dug-up site which it should have been if the Taj had been commissioned by Shahjahan. Even today kanats and tents would have to be provided for if a large gathering were to assemble at the Taj to protect them from scorching heat or biting cold.

Hansen's and other writers' reference to the tomb being under construction are quite pertinent if they are taken in the proper sense, namely that all the buildings in the precincts including the one called the Jamiat Khana, its counterpart which is being misrepresented as a mosque, and the central edifice capped with the marble dome had been enclosed in intricate scaffolding both for repairs and for deceptive, misappropriative Islamic overwriting. The central octagonal sanctum sanctorum of the ancient Hindus had been broken into and Mumtaz was buried in its central part in a trench. On the upper floors cenotaphs were being raised so that none of the floors may be left usable if the building was again

lost to the Hindus: Several floors were being walled up. Since this involved considerable tampering, marble stripped from the other floors meant to be permanently barred and sealed, was being used for the cenotaphs. We have deliberately used the word 'cenotaphs' in the plural because though while Shahjahan was alive Mumtaz alone was buried in the central portion of the Taj yet as other persons connected with the Mogul court kept dying they too were brought for burial in the Taj premises so that the whole precincts could be turned into a vast Muslim graveyard to rule out any future possibility of the premises reverting to Hindu use. This fact remains hidden from the lay visitor and is unknown even to history scholars. If they have enough time on hand to make a meticulous study of the precincts they may see the grave of Satunnisa Khanum (the maid of Mumtaz) in one pavilion, that of Sarhandi Begum (a harem queen of Shahjahan) in another symmetrical pavilion, and a number of other graves of other Mohameds, Ahmeds and Ibrahims littered all around in various pavilions to the east and west. Curiously enough those pavilions are all octagonal in the orthodox Hindu fashion as is the Taj edifice itself.

When such extensive premises are undergoing Islamic tampering from top to bottom in a leisurely fashion over a number of years alien visitors like Mundy and Tavernier are bound to refer to it as a mausoleum under construction. But it is upto the modern researcher not to be misled by those notings and to understand the full implication of what those travellers have said, in the proper context and perspective. Researchers must also not forget that Shahjahan himself has in no inscription claimed that he built the Taj. Contrarily his Badshahnama admits that it was Raja Mansingh's mansion. It should also be noted that in the whole of Shahjanhan's court record there is not even a single scrap of paper alluding to the building of the Taj and not a single blueprint of either the whole building or any of the decorative panels in it. The construction work that all and sundry refer to is nothing but the graves, raising a scaffolding, levelling the hillocks, engravings of the Koran on the walls and sealing of the surplus stories. If this is clearly understood by every student of history and visitor to the Taj Mahal the riddle about Shahjahan himself not saying a word about building the Taj Mahal but other aliens repeatedly referring to the building work

would be clear in no time.

Peter Mundy who left Agra for England within two years of Mumtaz's death has left a very clinching observation that the buildings worth seeing in and around Agra include Taj-e-Mahal's tomb and Echeber's (i. e. Akbar's) tomb. That clearly establishes the fact that Mumtaz was buried in the spectacular Tejomahalaya Hindu temple-palace complex.

A funny detail which emerges from the notings of Western visitors is their confusion as to whether the term Taj-e-Mahal signifies the buried woman or the marble edifice or the adjacent bazar?

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CHAPTER VI

SOME ENCYCLOPAEDIC VERSIONS

EVEN though we have conclusively proved in the preceding chapters by quoting Shahjahan's own chronicler Abdul Hamid and a French visitor Tavernier that the Taj Mahal is a commandeered Hindu palace, yet in order to acquaint the reader with all the ramifications of this blind man's buff that has been going on about the Taj Mahal for 350 years, we would like to discuss every aspect of it separately.

As part of such a discussion we intend giving the reader, in a few succeeding chapters, a sampling of the diverse and inconsistent versions of the origin of the Taj Mahal. Let us first see what the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*[10] has to say :

"Taj Mahal, the mausoleum built on the south bank of the Jumna river, outside Agra in India, on the orders of the Mogul emperor Shahjahan in memory of his beloved wife, Arjumand Banu Begum, called Mumtaz-i-Mahal "chosen one of the palace" (of which Taj Mahal is a corruption). She died in childbirth in the town of Burhanpur in 1631 after having been the emperor's inseparable companion since their marriage in 1612. The building was commenced in 1632, after plans had been prepared by a council of architects from India, Persia, Central Asia and beyond; the credit for the final plan is given to one Ustad Isa, either Turkish or Persian, although the master-builders, masons, inlayers and calligraphists, like the materials they worked with, came from all over India and Central Asia. More than 20,000 workmen were employed daily to complete the mausoleum building itself by 1643, although the whole Taj complex took 22 years to complete, at a cost of 400 lakhs of rupees.

"The complex consists of a rectangle measuring 634 yds. by

10. P. 139 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 21, 1964 Ed.

334 yds. aligned North and South. A central square garden area, 334 yds. on each side, leaves an oblong area at each end that at the south consists of the sandstone entrance gateway with its attendant service-building while that at the norh (river end) comprises the mausoleum itself, flanked on the west and east walls by two symmetrically identical buildings, the mosque and its *jawab* (answer) respectively. All is enclosed within a high red sandstone boundary wall with octagonal pavilion turrets at the corners while outside the enclosure at the south are ancillary buildings such as *stables, outhouses and guard quarters*. The whole complex is the begum's memorial. It was conceived and planned as an entity, since Mogul building-practice allowed of no subsequent addition or amendment. Its northern end is the most significant architecturally with mosque and *jawab* of red Sikri sandstone, with marble necked (not bulbous) domes and architraves and some restrained *pietra dura* surface decoration, constrast well with the mausoleum of pure white Makrana marble. This mausoleum standing on 312 ft. square marble plinth 23 ft. high is a square of 186 ft. with chamfered corners and with a massive arch in each face, rising to 108 ft. Over all is a bulbous double dome, supported on a tall drum the pinnacle of which stands 243 ft. above garden level. The skyline rhythm is enhanced by parapets over each arch, corner pinnacles and domed kiosks over each corner. At each corner of the plinth stands a three-storied minaret, 138 ft. high to the crowning kiosk. Inside the mausoleum is the octagonal chamber, embellished with low-relief patterns and fine *pietra dura*, containing the cenotaph of the begum and Shahjahan. These, of marble decorated with superb *pietra dura*, are enclosed by an exquisite perforated marble-screen studded with precious stones. A vault below, at garden level, contains the true sarcophagi. The Moguls are said to have 'built like Titans and finished like goldsmiths'. Certainly the Taj Mahal is their finest jewel."

In the opening part of the extract, the reader may note the explanation given of Arjumand Banu Begum's title Mumtaz Mahal, the title meaning the chosen one of the palace (of which the Taj Mahal is a corruption). This explanation clearly shows that the title stuck to the queen after her death because a (Hindu) palace was "chosen" for the burial. We have quoted Shahjahan's official

chronicle to show that while Mumtaz was alive her name was not "Mumtaz Mahal" but "Mumtaz-ul-Zamani". Accounts like the one in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* which presume that the term "Taj Mahal" is a contraction of the lady's name "Mumtaz Mahal" are wrong. The lady's name was never Mumtaz Mahal. Muslim parlance foisted that name posthumously when she was buried in a palace. Thus, far from the building getting its name from the lady, it is the lady who has acquired the name from the commandeered Hindu palace. So irresistible was the beauty, magnificence, majesty and fame of the commandeered Hindu palace that Shahjahan's dead queen got a new posthumous name from the scintillating building.

The *Encyclopaedia* places the death of Mumtaz in 1631 while we will show later that other accounts place it anywhere between 1629-32. So even the date of Mumtaz's death is uncertain. Naturally, therefore, all subsequent dates of her exhumed body being carried to Agra, and of the mythical building of the Taj Mahal are concoctions. This should convince the reader of the utter unreliability of Muslim chroniclers with regard to even such simple and definite matters as imporatnt dates. This point also illustrates how every aspect of the Taj Mahal story is suspect.

The *Encyclopaedia* mentions 1632 as the year in which the building of the Taj Mahal was commenced. In the extract from the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* (Encyclopaedia) which we are going to quote hereafter the year of the commencement of the Taj Mahal is stated to be 1631. Such inconsistencies are inevitable when the initial date of Mumtaz's death is itself unknown.

Equally loosely, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* asserts that "plans had been prepared by a council of architects from India, Persia, Central Asia and beyond."

The above assertion needs to be closely examined. Assuming 1631 as the year of Mumtaz's death, we would like to ask whether in those days of bullockcart and camel transport it was conceivable that architects in remote parts of the world could be chosen, contacted, explained the kings's idea of a fabulous tomb, a council established to finalize the plan, the material and labour collected and the building work begun, all within one year or even less

than a year? No scholar or writer seems to have subjected the diverse versions of the Taj Mahal to such close scrutiny.

We would further like to point out that the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* (encyclopaedia) to be quoted later does not mention a council of architects but says that, of several plans ordered from different architects, one was chosen.

Another point is that Emperor Shahjahan's own chronicler, in the passage quoted earlier does not mention any blueprint or architect. He is right, and the encyclopaedic accounts false. Because as said by him, Mumtaz was buried in a readymade palace. If a plan had actually been made, it should have been found among Shahjahan's court papers. But it is not there. The amount of Rs. forty million mentioned by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is 10 times the amount of four million rupees mentioned by Shahjahan's own official chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori, quoted earlier. The reader may note this as an example of how the cost of the Taj Mahal has been inflated in various accounts.

The *Encyclopaedia's* reference to ancillary buildings such as "stables, outhouses and guard quarters" is noteworthy. Such ancillaries are never needed by a dead person. On the contrary they are always needed in a Hindu palace or temple.

The octagonal pavilion turrets mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia* are a Hindu royal tradition deriving from the *Ramayana*. Rama is the ideal of Hindu kingship. His capital Ayodhya was octagonal as mentioned in Valmiki's *Ramayana*. Hindu, Sanskrit tradition alone has special names for all the eight directions. It also specifies special guardian deities for all the eight directions. A king is supposed to wield authority in all the 10 directions. These 10 directions include the heaven above and the nether world. The pinnacle of a building points to the heaven while the building's foundation points to the nether world. Thus an octagonal building along with its pinnacle and foundation accords with the Hindu concept of the king's or God's authority extending to all the 10 directions. It is, therefore, that orthodox Hindu constructions are octagonal. The octagonal shape of the Taj Mahal itself and of its pavilion turrets prove it to be out and out Hindu in design. In Muslim tradition an octagon has no significance.

Encyclopaedia Britannica is wrong in terming the four marble towers around the Taj Mahal as "minarets." Muslim minarets are always part of the building. These ones which are detached from the main marble building are Hindu pillars or towers. They must not be called minarets. In Hindu tradition every sacred plinth must be framed up with corner towers lest it be mistaken for a sepulchre. Let us now compare the account given by the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* (encyclopaedia).

The *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* says[11] :

"The Taj Mahal is reckoned as the most beautiful building in the world. It is located on the southern bank of the Yamuna river, about three miles from Agra City. Twenty thousand workmen laboured to build it. The building testifies to the excellence that Indian architecture had then attained.

"In 1607 A. D. when Shahjahan was fifteen years old (his father Emperor) Jahangir engaged him to Arjumand Bano alias Mumtaz Mahal. Five years later the two were married. She died at Burhanpur in 1631 A. D. Shahjahan grieved her loss so much that he did not attend court for eight days. He used to sob inconsolably near his wife's tomb. She was first buried in Burhanpur, but her body was exhumed and taken to Agra. To the south of Agra Raja Jaisingh had some landed estate. The Emperor purchased it from him and called for building plans from eminent architects. One of them was approved and a wooden model of it was got prepared. Construction of the building as per the model commenced early in [illegible] A. D. and ended in January 1643 A. D. Makammal Khan and Abdul Karim were the two chief supervisors. The building cost Rs. [illegible]. Afridi asserts it cost Rs. 91,700,000 and the following were the workers — Amanat Khan Shirazi, Easa mason, Piru carpenter, Bannohar, Zatmulla and Zorawar; Ismail Khan Rumi built the dome and its paranchie (sic); Ramlal Kashmiri, Bagwan, etc. Stone of twenty best varieties has been used in the building. The Emperor entered the Taj Mahal in 1643 A. D. and assigned thirty surrounding towns yielding Rs. 100,000 revenue for the upkeep of the surrounding serais, shops and garden."

11. Pp. 35-36, Vol. 15, *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*, ibid.

Comparing the two encyclopaedic accounts, obviously based on some of the most handy concoctions available to their respective writers, we find that they greatly differ from each other.

The vacant estate referred to above is a misconception since Shahjahan's court chronicler asserts that it was Mansingh's lofty palace set amidst a majestic garden that was chosen for Mumtaz's burial.

The *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* asserts that Shahjahan called for plans from different eminent architects and selected one. As against this the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* wants us to believe that it was a council of architects who jointly planned the monument.

Here we would like to ask which were the architectural schools where these architects studied or taught? Where are their architectural text - books to be found in ancient or mediaeval Muslim literature? As against this we can list hundreds of texts of the ancient Hindu system of architecture and civil engineering. We shall also prove subsequently how the Taj Mahal answers to Hindu specifications in every detail.

Another question that a true researcher must ask himself is whether even a single blueprint, among, may be, the dozens tendered, is available among Shahjahan's court papers? Along with those blueprints should also be thousands of receipts given for the material received, the day-to-day expense account of the amounts spent on the Taj Mahal, and the labourers' muster rolls. How is it that not even a scrap of paper of the kinds described above, is available?

While the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* mentions only one name - Ustad Isa, the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*, far from making any reference to it, mentions those of Makammal Khan, Abdul Karim and a few others.

It should be particularly noted that the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*, like the *Badshahnama*, does not mention any architect.

While the period of construction is mentioned as 22 years in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, it is stated to be only 12 years in the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*. Obviously the former relies on Tavernier while the latter on one of the many imaginative Muslim accounts.

As regards the cost *Encyclopaedia Britannica* somehow chooses the figure of rupees four million while the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* is unable to decide between the claims made in different concocted versions from Rs. 50,00,000 to Rs. 917,00,000. We are at a loss to know why and on what authority they reject or disbelieve the figure of rupees four million given by Shahjahan's official chronicler, or how they do not happen even to mention it.

It may be noted that both the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* harp on "20,000 labourers." As we have shown earlier it is Tavernier who claims that 20,000 labourers were employed. The fact that the encyclopaedias have to rely on Tavernier's figure shows that Shahjahan's court records make no mention of any labourers or at least of any sizeable labour force. This is a glaring anomaly. Shahjahan's court papers should have had a regular muster roll of the huge number of labourers who are supposed to have toiled for years on end in building the Taj Mahal. The absence of any such record is a clear indication that Shahjahan did not build the Taj Mahal. He only buried Mumtaz in a commandeered mansion. Tavernier was only a casual foreign visitor. His figure is only hearsay gathered from bluffing, chauvinistic Muslim hangers-on at Shahjahan's court who were interested in boosting Muslim "achievements".

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CHAPTER VII

A RECENT CONCOCTION OF THE SHAHJAHAN LEGEND

A REMARKABLE instance of how the antecedents of the Taj Mahal continue to be a "free-for-all" theme for all writers even to our own day is provided by an article published[12] in the Illustrated Weekly of India.

We shall first reproduce the whole article and then comment on it. The article, a typed copy of which was provided to us by a friend, is as follows :

"THE BUILDERS OF THE TAJ MAHAL - ANCIENT SECRET REVEALED

"TOURISTS come from the world over to see the Taj at Agra and all marvel at the genius of the architects that could plan and accomplish so lovely a 'dream in marble'. They were commissioned by the Mogul Emperor Shahjahan to raise a mausoleum befitting his love for Mumtaz Mahal, his beloved consort; and they created this Wonder of the World.

"Yet, despite strenuous efforts to discover it, their identity had remained a mystery; wild guesses as to their origin being foreign were abroad. Even Bernier (1642 A. D.) notes only a rumour that the architect was killed lest the secret of his art be revealed and a rival to the Taj created.

"But the secret has at long last been found in a manuscript book discovered lately in the library of Mr. Mehmud Khan of Bangalore. The glory of building the Taj belongs definitely to India, to a family of Lahore architects, Ahmad, the father, and his three sons. The book is in Persian verses in the Persian character. Its

12. Article titled 'The Builders of the Taj Mahal - Ancient Secret Revealed' by Mohamed Khan, published in the Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay, dated April 4, 19[illegible].

author being Lathfullah Mahandis, himself one of the three son architects, and it is almost 300 years old, falling within the last years of Shahjahan's reign.

"It has been declared to be the only copy in the world, by the well-known authority on these matters, Syed Suleiman Sahib Nadvi, Principal, Shibly Academy, Azamgarh.

"The book is in Mahandis' own handwriting. As is noticed from different verses, the author was a staunch follower of Dara Shikoh, Shahjahan's eldest son, and when Aurangzeb finally came to power, after defeating Dara Shikoh, the author and his family suffered. He sent a petition to the Emperor (page 67) but as it was not heeded the family had to retire into seclusion and poverty (page 68).

"It seems that the book was very secretly kept by the family in fear of Aurangzeb, as it contained verses in praise of Dara Shikoh. The subsequent dates and writing on the last page show that the book was brought and was kept in the library of the historical personage Nawab Ebrahim Khan Hazbar Jung, the famous Mohammedan general nicknamed Gardy, who sided with the Maharatas in the battle of Panipat in 1761 against Ahmed Shah Abdali. The book has been in the family of the present owner for generations, but it was not noticed until Moulana Syed Suleiman Nadvi, the well-known historian, author and editor of the Moariff (the monthly journal of the Society of Authors and Shibly Academy, Azamgarh, U.P.) discovered it and, on information gleaned from it, read a lengthy Urdu paper on the builders of the Taj in the Punjab University.

"In the verses on two pages of the book described in the aricle, the author praises Shahjahan, and speaks of his father Ahmed, the 'Nadar-ul-Asar' (the unique of the world), as supreme master-craftsman, geometer, astronomer and prosateur. He was appointed court architect by Shahjahan's Royal Warrant, and was *the builder of the Taj mahal at Agra and the Lal Quila (Red Fort) at Delhi.* He died in 1649, two years after the Taj was built. The author, his son and co-architect of the Taj, learnt at his feet."

According to this version the Taj Mahal was completed within 16 to 17 years of Arjumand Banu Begum's death and not 12, 13

or 22 years as the earlier versions assert.

We fully agree with the learned writer Mr.Mohamed Khan that "despite strenuous efforts to discover the identity of the architects that could plan and accomplish so lovely a 'dream in marble' their identity has remained a mystery."

That means that the names given in the encyclopaedias quoted above are not considered reliable by anybody. Had they been considered reliable nobody would have bothered to continue the search for the "real" names. The search will never end because it is proceeding in the wrong direction. This unending search is itself proof that Shahjahan did not build the Taj Mahal. Had he really built it, the names of the architects and all the other valid details would have found a place in contemporary chronicles and his own official chronicle.

But despite the unauthenticity of the differing names mentioned by the encyclopaedias in describing the Taj Mahal, we do not blame the encyclopaedias. Their accounts are obviously based on the diverse imaginary versions recorded in a number of Muslim accounts like Mohammad Amin Kazwini's *Badshahnama*; Abdul Hamid Lahori's *Badshahnama*, Inayat Khan's *Shahjahan-nama*; Mohammad Waris's *Badshahnama*; Mohammad Salih Kambu's *Amal-i-Salih*, Mohammad Sadik Khan's *Sahahjahan-nama*; Mohammad Sharif Hanif's *Majlis-us-Salatin*; Mufazzal Khan's *Tarikh-i-Mufassali*, Bakhtawar Khan's *Mirat-i-Alam*, and also his *Mirat-i-Jahan-nama*; Azizulla's *Zinat-ul-Tawarikh* and Rai Bharat Mulla's *Lubbut Tawarikh-i-Hind* and the *Diwan-i-Afridi*.

All the above Muslim chronicles are, according to Sir H. M. Elliot and almost all Western scholars, "an impudent and interested fraud."

Since the encyclopaedic writers banked on these "frauds" it is no wonder that they, and through them their readers too, have been badly duped not only over the origin of the Taj Mahal but in relation to the entire range of mediaeval history.

Getting back to Mr. Mohamed Khan's article, which we are examining in this chapter, we find him observing, "wild guesses as to their (architects') origin being foreign were abroad." Here

we might like to suggest a slight amendment. The wild guesses he refers to apply not only to foreign names but to all of Shahjahan's contemporaries - including natives. That is to say, even the local Muslim (or for that matter even Hindu) names being mentioned are products of fertile guesses.

We ask, what right anybody has to make guesses when Shahjahan's own court chronicler mentions no designer?

"Even Bernier," adds Mr. Mohammed Khan, "notes only a rumour that the architect was killed lest the secret of his art be revealed and a rival to the Taj be created."

Here we would like to tell all readers and students of history to remember one handicap of Western visitors during Muslim rule in India. The Muslim court being a parasitical graft deriving its sustenance from the sap of plunder and massacre, it exuded nothing but falsehoods and rumours. Even ordinary talk was all bluff and bluster. The Western visitors at Muslim courts had willy nilly to record the facile and facetious replies they got from hangers-on at the Muslim court.

When, therefore, poor gullible Bernier asked to be shown the master architect of the Taj Mahal he was effectively silenced and put off by being told that the designer was murdered so that he may not build a rival Taj Mahal for any rival of Shahjahan. A myriad questions jump to the surface of our mind on reading this absurd plea.

At the outset, of course, we agree that the fictitious "designer" of the Taj Mahal could be "murdered" with the same facility with which he was "created". Writers of shilling shockers often create and kill some of their characters with a mere flourish of their pen. There is no reason why wagging tongues at Shahjahan's court need have been lagging in that art.

One of the questions which arise is why was not Bernier told at least the name of the murdered man so that he could have recorded it for posterity? Or is it argued that even the name was "murdered"?

The second question is, whether raising a Taj Mahal is mere fun so that anybody could get up and book the same architect

for building another Taj Mahal? Was there a surfeit of affluent Muslim widowers under Shahjahan's rule who were keen to raise proto-Tajmahals over the corpses of their own consorts to cock a snook at Shahjahan? Why should Shahjahan dread such an eventuality? Who had the money to build another Taj Mahal? We are going to prove in the succeeding pages that even Shahjahan himself did not possess the means to order a building half as beautiful, majestic and spacious as this ancient Hindu palace-cum-temple known to us as the Taj Mahal.

The third question is, whether Shahjahan was playing to the gallery and seeking a cheap exclusive architectural patent for the Taj Mahal in wanting to forestall and foreclose other claims, or was he a genuine, inconsolably bereaved spouse? Once we are told (by Tavernier) that Shahjahan buried Mumtaz close to a bazar to win public approbation. Then we are told that he murdered the architect to prevent him from obliging some other likely grand Moghul in building a rival monument. All this makes us wonder whether Shahjahan was a dignified emperor or a clown of some Shakespearean play with his hand on a dead Mumtaz's pulse and his eye fixed on public acclaim!

Yet another question is, whether Shahjahan, so soft-hearted as to squander all his wealth on a dreamland monument for his dead wife, would at once turn so wild and treacherous as to execute the very architect who gave a concrete form to his dream?

Another doubt which arises is, whether Shahjahan had planned to live in sack-cloth and ashes after expending all his wealth in immortalising a corpse?

Such are the abounding absurdities which should reveal themselves to any matter-of-fact, man-of-the-world historian.

The amount of such gullibility that has gone into the writing of Indian history is astounding.

The detective-like approach, the lawyer-like questioning, logical reasoning and all such guidelines prescribed by renowned methodologists like Renier, Walsh and Collingwood have been completely ignored, and a sham history is offered to us which can be torn to pieces with a little close questioning.

The author of the article, Mr. Mohammed Khan, claims that "the secret has at last been found". We wish he really had found it. We are ready to accept a part of the implication of his claim, namely, that all the books and accounts hitherto ascribing the creation of the Taj Mahal to other architects are false. But as for the second part of his claim, that his version is the last word on the matter, we are afraid it is untenable.

Still, we attach great value to his discovery of the manuscript in the library of Mr. Mahmud Khan of Bangalore, because it further supports very firmly the assertion we had made long back. Our assertion is that so far as we know no historian or university has ever dared to bring together under one cover all the (fictitious) accounts of Shahjahan's sponsorship of the Taj Mahal. No one could ever hope to succeed in such an undertaking. It was like trying to fathom a bottomless abyss of forgeries or fencing off an ocean of falsehoods.

What Mr. Mohammed Khan has discovered, therefore, is nothing but yet another fictitious account. Any number of such could still be discovered in any part of the world, because who knows how many persons, during the last three hundred years, had their fingers in this make-believe pie of the imaginary Shahjahan sponsorship of the Taj Mahal.

The article itself has the "germs" to indicate that the "pie" is stale stuff. The very fact that the book is a hodge-podge of the praise of one Moghul prince and a claim by the author of having been a master-builder of the Taj Mahal along with his father and two brothers, and the fact of the book having been tucked away in a cellar for fear of Aurangzeb - all clearly proclaim that Lathfullah's account deserves to be ranked no better than the other Muslim chronicles namely as yet another cock-and-bull story.

Aurangzeb was too shrewd, hard-hearted and hard-headed an emperor to tolerate such fantastic and fictitious claims. We have quoted Aurangzeb's own letter to that effect elsewhere in this book. When he knew from personal knowledge (unlike modern historians) that the Taj Mahal was an usurped Hindu palace, what Muslim mason or architect could dare curry favour with him claiming to be its creator? It was this fact which obviously led Lathfullah

Mahandis to beguile the tedium of an unemployed hour by writing some Persian verse and tucking away the book in a cellar to deceive and regale posterity. He does not seem to have been very wrong for here we are, confronted with his version, and asked to believe implicitly in it as the ultimate and exclusive gospel truth and the last word on the Taj Mahal. But alas, even this latest version was received by posterity coldly and dropped like a hot brick. It failed to make any impression. How could it hope to, anyway? Any version of Shahjahan's sponsorship of the Taj Mahal will have to face a battery of questions. So Ahmad Mahandis' claim too has been suffered to glide silently down the drain of history by an unimpressed posterity, unwept, unsung and unheeded.

Yet we are ready to concede two uses of the Lathfullah version. Its authoritarian claim is useful as a stick to beat the other equally fictitious versions with, and to turn them out of the field of history.

Its other use is that we see no harm in admitting Lathfullah Mahandis' claim that he, his two brothers and their father Ahmad were among those employed by Shahjahan as gravediggers, stone-masons, scaffolding-erectors or Koran carvers when Shahjahan had those superficial changes made in turning a commandeered Hindu palace into a graveyard.

Here we also admit that the different names given in the various accounts and books on the Taj Mahal could all be true and genuine in the sense that persons bearing those names gave a hand and played a role in turning the Hindu palace into a Muslim tomb. Because the tampering enumerated above needed thousands of men of which only a few hundred names have come down to us, and there is no reason why they should be untrue.

But it is the role that is being foisted on them that is fictitious. That is why the game has been going on merrily for the last 300 years, with the mask falling from one face only to be hastily picked up by another to parade as the real creator of the Taj Mahal.

In admitting all the names included in the different versions to be those of the true workers in the Hindu palace-to Muslim tomb transformation project, we once again illustrate how the overall truth reconciles even the underlying motivated falsehoods. And this is one of the tests of the soundness of a new historical finding. A new finding, if it is the real answer, must adequately reconcile the loose ends of the older versions.

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CHAPTER VIII

YET ANOTHER CONFUSED ACCOUNT

IN ACCORDANCE with our plan to acquaint the reader with a fair sampling of the wide variety of the traditional, confused versions of the origin of the Taj Mahal, we are reproducing here extracts from another article[17] which also appeared in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. The article runs thus :

''When the Taj Mahal was built, the many mechanical aids available today were unheard of; yet the extraordinary ingenuity employed in its construction and the high degree of engineering skill evidenced in its design make the mind pause.

''Not less remarkable were the talent and skill of the artisans employed. In translating this fabulous architectural dream into brick and mortar, an area 967 ft. long and 373 ft. wide was excavated to a depth of 44 ft. where sub-soil water was met. The whole excavated area was filled in mass with rubble stone in hydraulic lime to provide a common foundation for the three heavy structures, the Taj Mahal, Jamaat-Khana and one mosque which were to be raised close to one another. About 20,000 men were engaged on this work.

''Over this foundation the plinth of the Taj Mahal, 313 ft. square and 8 ft. high, was built in stone with hydraulic lime mortar and marble stone casing. The casing was laid after the rubble masonry was raised to its designed height.. then the marble facing was set.

''The main engineering problem was to haul up the materials to the required height during the progress of the work. This was done by constructing wooden *pillars of square timber posts bundled*

17. Article titled, *Some Facts About the Taj Mahal* by Mohammed Din, published in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* dated December 30, 1961.

together and skilfully tied with top levels at different heights, and so spaced as to carry a strong platform, 40 ft. wide, and a spiral roadway with a slope of 1 in 20, to permit loaded mules and mule carts to run over it, and to hold dumps of materials for construction work. This spiral platform was continuous and ran all round the dome, and remained in position till the work was raised to its designed height of 240 ft. above ground level. Special engineers were engaged to build the scaffolding and platform, and 500 carpenters and 300 blacksmiths were employed on this project alone. The total length of the spiral platform was about 4,800 ft. The mortar was hoisted by means of Persian wheels which were fitted on the spiral platform. These were worked by bullocks and mules.

''The materials for the massive work were brought from many distant places. The marble stone was obtained from Makrana in Rajputana, for which about a thousand elephants were engaged. The maximum weight of a block of stone was about 2.5 tons, which is the safe carrying capacity of an elephant. A number of elephants were also engaged to work the pulleys.

''The timber for scaffolding was brought from the Kashmir and Naini Tal areas. About 2000 camels and 1000 bullockcarts were employed for carting bricks and light materials to the construction site and about 1000 mules for lifting the materials along the spiral platform.

''The marble stone required for drum and dome was dressed on the ground and then lifted and laid in position by means of the pulleys...

''After the main dome and drum work was finished, work on annexes and subsidiary buildings was taken in hand and completed in the same manner...

''There are four minarets at the four corners of the Taj Mahal...

''The river Jumna was half a mile away from the structure. After the building was completed, the river was diverted artificially to flow alongside the Taj to add to the beauty of the landscape.

''Contemporary Muslim writers recorded the names of those who designed and constructed the Taj Mahal, and the names and quantities of precious stones used. It appears that Mohammed Isa Afandi, of Turkey, was the chief designer and draftsman. Among

the other foreigners employed on the construction, there were men from Arabia, Persia, Syria, Baghdad and Samarkand and there was at least one Frenchman, Austin de Bordeaux, a goldsmith.

"The precious stones used included 540 pieces of cornelian from Baghdad, 670 turquoises from Upper Tibet, 614 malachites from Russia, 558 onyxes from Deccan and 625 diamonds from Central India. The construction of the Taj Mahal was begun in 1632 and was not completed till 1650. It is belived to have cost *more than a crore and a half of rupees* which, in terms of the present value of money, would be at least ten times as much. *Two-thirds of this was contributed by the State office* and *one-third by the State treasury of the province.* The allocations of expenditures on differnt parts of the structure have been carefully recorded in documents which are still existent.

"Shah Jahan, magnificent in his kingship, was equally magnificent in his sorrows. This exquisite memorial of an emperor's love was built by the sorrowing Shah Jahan for his departed spouse. He *manifestly designed it* to go down in history to a worshipful posterity; three hundred years after, it is still acclaimed as one of the supreme achievements of the architect."

Let us subject the above article to a close cross-examination. The measurements mentioned could of course always be taken from the erstwhile Hindu temple palace, which stands before us today as the Taj Mahal, and stuffed into any post-mortem of the construction.

The account of how the edifice was erected is apparently the result of an hind-sight post-mortem carried out by some contemporary architects, as far as they can visualize it.

As for the 500 carpenters and 300 blacksmiths and such others employed, we have no special objection because that many would be easily absorbed in erecting even a scaffolding around the massive Hindu temple palace, which the Taj Mahal is, to convert it into a Muslim tomb.

When it comes to identifying the architects, the article throws no new light on the subject. It only repeats a few old names. And as we have noted earlier, all those names could be true inasmuch as there could be persons of those names who helped convert the Hindu edifice into a Muslim tomb.

As for diverting the distant Yamuna river to flow close enough to the Taj Mahal the less said the better, because we assert that the Muslim regimes lacked all such skill. The few schools they had in those days of incessant plunder and massacre campaigns were devoted to teaching a few illiterate fanatics to read the Koran. We repeat that ancient or mediaeval Muslim literature has no architectural texts of its own which could atleast make out a prima facie case for the claim to any architectural or civil engineering skill. As against this, we have a whole lot of Indian, Hindu architectural classics which boast of skills in all aspects of civil engineering surpassing those of our own times. No wonder then that we see standing even to this day the majestic and massive hill fortresses of Ajmer, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner, as well as the wonder shrines of Konark, Khajuraho, Somnath, Ajanta, Ellora, Madurai, Martand and Modhera, to name only a few.

Hindu forts and palaces always used to be built alongside rivers for two reasons. Rivers provided a natural moat at least on one side and proved an unfailing, perennial source of water. The palace of Mansingh (i.e. the one inherited by him and not necessarily built by him) was, therefore, already erected on the river bank. That palace is the present Taj Mahal and therefore, diverting the river was out of the question.

The figures of 1,000 bullock-carts 1,000 mules and 2,000 camels are too round to be believed. Moreover, allowing for some imaginative exaggeration we concede that all those animals and carts were necessary when a huge palace complex had to be tampered with for transformation into a tomb.

We, however, object to the word 'minarets' used by the author. The Taj Mahal has towers but no minarets. There is a vital difference between the two. Muslim minarets rise from the shoulders of buildings. Hindu towers start from the floor level - such as the so-called Kutub Minar (Delhi), the so-called Hiran Minar (Fatehpur Sikri) the marble towers of the Taj Mahal and the Rana Kumbha tower in Chittor fort.

Mr. Mohammed Din asserts that the building is "marvellous [illegible] at the time of its completion" and stands as fresh as it was [illegible] the learned author of the article. We are in full agreement with [illegible] was erected in Shahjahan's [illegible]
But since he implies that the building

time, we disagree and say that the temple palace known as the Taj Mahal existed centuries before the Muslim invasions of India.

In the concluding portion of the article the writer tells us that the previous stones used in the Taj Mahal included 540 pieces of cornelian from Baghdad, 670 turquoises from Upper Tibet, and so on. Here we would only like to quote the sagacious Sir H. M. Elliot. He says :[14] "The pretended accuracy and minuteness with which the value of gold, silver and precious stones is given and the astounding exaggeration displayed in enumerating sums convey to the mind strong internal evidence of fabrication"

Though the above remarks of Sir H. M. Elliot pertain to the many versions of the *Jahangirnama* yet they have a general application to all Muslim chronicles.

We would, therefore, like to inform the writer of the article, Mr. Mohammed Din, and other readers, that the very meticulousness with which the figures and sources of various stones are given should arouse their suspicions. A discerning and gifted historian like the late Sir H. M. Elliot could with his uncanny insight see through all such concoctions.

The documents to which the author of the article refers, which allegedly contain an accurate account of the amounts incurred on the Taj Mahal, can easily be proved to be forged by the simple fact that the expenditure incurred on the Taj Mahal varies in different versions from four million rupees to over ninety million rupees. In between lies the source from which Mr. Mohammed Din quotes the expenditure to have been in the neighbourhood of 15 million (a crore and a half) rupees.

The reference to the "timber posts bundled together" is another detail which betrays the unauthenticity of Mr. Mohammed Din's source because Tavernier has already told us that no timber being available, all scaffolding had to be of bricks and that is why the cost of the scaffolding exceeded that of all other work executed.

And above all the greatest drawback of Mr. Mohammed Din's article is that he quotes no authority for his facts and figures.

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14. P. 257. Elliot & Dowson, *History*, ibid, Vol. VI.

CHAPTER IX

THE BADSHAHNAMA VERSION ANALYSED

THE SAMPLE versions quoted earlier should suffice to convince the reader of the medley that is the Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal. The more one goes into it the more confused one feels. As observed earlier, they form a big bottomless abyss which nobody can fathom. From everyday experience we know that a basic falsehood is never adequately covered or explained by subsequent falsehoods. Such falsehoods go on multiplying in bewildering variety. This is exactly what has happened with regard to the Taj Mahal.

After a general survey of the various sources from which concoctions of the Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal have sprouted, we have arrived at the conclusion that Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori, the court chronicler who admits the Taj Mahal to be a Hindu palace, is the only honest one.

Let us, therefore, examine his chronicle a little more closely. All this confusion about the origin of the Taj Mahal has arisen because historians completely ignored the wording on page 403, Vol. I, of the *Badshahnama*. Perhaps his words got ignored because they had all along fancied the Taj Mahal to be an original tomb raised as a fabulous dreamland monument to love. Now that we find him to be more truthful and honest let us have another, closer look at the account of the Taj Mahal given in the *Badshahnama*.

The first point to be noted is that while traditional rumours have tended to tell us that Shahjahan obtained an open plot of land from Jaisingh and built a wonder mausoleum on it, Mulla Abdul Hamid with disarming candour tells us that it was Jaisingh who was given an open piece of land in exchange for his fabulous ancestral (*manzil, aali manzil, imaarat-e-alishan wa gumbaze*) domed palace. We are also told that this palace had a majestic,

spacious (*[illegible]*) garden around it.

Had Shahjahan wanted to build anything *de novo* would he choose a site which had a majestic palace standing on it? The very cost of its demolition and clearing of its foundation to dig another would be stupendous. Carting away the debris would be another very Herculean chore. And would he spend all that time, money and energy when he had another "grand" plot of land which he is said to have given to Jaisingh in exchange? Besides, what does the exchange show? Does it not show that Shahjahan wanted Jaisingh to fend for himself by building another residence while Shahjahan made him surrender his ancestral palace to serve as a ready-made tomb for his wife, as well as by the same stroke further impoverish a wealthy Hindu family and denude it of its power? Was this also not consistent with the general Muslim usurping tradition in India and of Shahjahan's own high-handed behaviour with all and sundry which we shall deal with in a subsequent chapter?

We would like the reader to note that Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori refers to the removal of Mumtaz's body from Burhanpur to Agra in a very casual manner while talking on page 402 about somebody having been suitably punished for incurring royal anger. Mumtaz's body is brought from Burhanpur and straightaway buried under the dome of a lofty Hindu palace in Agra. What does it show? Lahori says the expenditure estimated (to transform it into a Muslim tomb, i.e. digging and filling up a grave, constructing a cenotaph, sealing surplus staircases and basement rooms, engraving the Koran, erecting a huge scaffolding) was four million rupees. We pass this figure as reasonable except perhaps for some exaggeration and over-estimate to allow for misappropriation by middle men. Then follows a long silence.

Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori gives some names and details of construction, on pages 322 to 330 in the second volume of his *Badshahnama*. He starts from the "foundation" which is often misunderstood to mean the foundation of a huge palace. A grave has to start from the 'foundation' because a dead body is to be buried in an earthy pit. His words that the foundation was brought to the ground level only mean that the grave was filled up with earth and masonry.

The author of the *Badshahnama* states[16] that half a million

rupees were spent on the grave (including the cenotaph). This is not surprising. The estimate for the entire project was four million (40 lakhs) rupees. Deducting the Rs. 5 lakhs spent on the grave and the cenotaph from the overall figure we find that the Koranic engravings (along with the huge scaffolding raised to reach various heights of the walls and arches) cost Rs. 35 lakhs. We have full corroboration for this lop-sided expenditure in Tavernier's statement that the cost of the scaffolding was more than that of the entire work. Here the cost of the scaffolding plus Koranic engravings is seven times that of the grave and cenotaph. As we have several times earlier pointed out, this disproportionate expenditure on the scaffolding itself is proof enough that the main work was comparatively insignificant.

Some readers are likely to consider five lakhs of rupees for the grave and the cenotaph abnormal expenditure, and therefore would conclude that something else was built with that amount. Such a conclusion is unwarranted. Firstly, because Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori himself has given us a correct idea of the palace taken over. Secondly, as we have already pointed out, Muslim figures have to be cut to size by deducting exaggeration and over-estimate margins. The remaining figure would be reasonable because demolishing the basement flooring and the ground flooring of a palace and superimposing a grave and a cenotaph on them and redoing the mosaic to match with the rich flooring of a Hindu palace, is bound to cost a huge sum.

The following conclusions emerge from what Emperor Shahjahan's own court chronicler has recorded in the official history of the reign, *Badshahnama* :

1. The Taj Mahal is a Hindu palace.

2. It had around it a majestic and spacious garden.

3. The huge building complex was obtained in exchange (if at all) for almost a song, i.e. at best transferring to the owner

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16. P. 714, *Badshahnama*, Vol. II, states -

"Wa panj lakh rupaye bar rauzaya munavvaraa ki binaye [illegible] aan bar ruje zameen deede aasman na deeda."

an open plot of land. This too seems fishy because the location and size of the plot of land are not mentioned. Most probably it was just a blatant expropriation effected by turning Jaisingh out of his wealthy ancestral palace. The detail that Jaisingh was compensated by gifting him on open plot of land is obviously a royal Islamic bluff to cover up the fact that Raja Jaisingh was blatantly robbed of his wealthy temple-palace.

4. The Hindu palace had a dome.

5. Mumtaz was buried, so they say, under that dome soon after her exhumed body was brought from Burhanpur to Agra, if at all.

6. The estimated expenditure (to transform the Hindu palace into a Muslim tomb) was Rs. 40 lakhs. (the actual expenditure is unknown).

7. Of the above sum, Rs. 5 lakhs was spent on the grave and cenotaph and the balance of Rs. 35 lakhs on the scaffolding and the Koranic engravings.

8. Designer or architects are out of the picture, since the Taj Mahal was never raised by Shahjahan.

9. The Hindu palace was known as Mansingh's palace during Emperor Shahjahan's time though it was in the occupation of his grandson Jaisingh.

The above account being fairly plausible fits with the truth that the Taj Mahal is an ancient Hindu palace commandeered for conversion into a Muslim tomb.

Subsequent guesses about the architect, and doubts such as that the figure of the amount spent on the Taj Mahal (Rs. 40 lakhs) is too low, are altogether unjustified and unwarranted.

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CHAPTER X

TAJ MAHAL CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

WE ARE going to show from this chapter onwards how the whole Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal is based on guesswork. Starting from the unwarranted assumption that Shahjahan had the Taj Mahal erected as a tomb for his wife Mumtaz, every detail has been conjured up by different writers according to their own fancy. In the result, history has been burdened with a mass of canards which baffled all attempts at getting to the origin of the Taj Mahal.

In this chapter we intend examining the question of its actual period of construction. Had the Taj Mahal really been built by Shahjahan, there should have been no room or necessity for any guess-work, for we should have had official records of the commissioning and execution of such a stupendous monument from start to finish? The absence of any authentic record is a glaring discrepancy. Some documents and records which at times find mention in some writings are apparent forgeries because they are hardly believed in by anybody.

If the Taj Mahal originated as a tomb the date of its commencement should be related to Mumtaz's death. But to start with, the very date of the death of this lady is unknown.

This is what Mr. Kanwar Lal says[17] : "Mumtaz passed away in 1630, the date of her death being 7th June... but some historians have erroneously placed the event in 1631. There is divergence also in respect of the date calculated; some mention 7th others 17th."

17. P. 29, The Taj by Kanwar Lal, published by R. K. Publishing House, 67 Daryaganj, Delhi. Price Rs. 30/-

Had Mumtaz been the wife so doted upon by Shahjahan as has been made out in fictitious accounts of the origin of the Taj Mahal, could there ever be such a lamentable divergence on the date of her death? But as we are going to show later, her death hardly mattered to Shahjahan. She was one of his many consorts in a harem teeming with at least 4,999 other claimants of the emperor's amorous attention.

As Mumtaz was just one among thousands of the emperor's consorts her death could never call for any special monument.

The date of Mumtaz's death being unknown we are at a loss to know from where to count the six months that her body lay in the grave in Burhanpur. Even that figure, "six months", may after all be only approximate and not accurate.

Even on arrival in Agra, we are told, Mumtaz was buried "the next year"[18] under the dome of the Hindu palace. This makes the date of her burial even more vague.

In spite of this fundamental vagueness we would have accepted the duration of the period during which the Taj Mahal was a-building if there had been any consensus about it among historians. Unfortunately, there is none. Let us see how many versions there are :

1. The *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* quoted by us earlier says[19] that the "construction commenced in 1631 A. D. and ended in January 1643 A. D." That gives us a period of a little less than 12 years.

2. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says[20] "the building was commenced in 1632. More than 20,000 workmen were employed daily to complete the mausoleum building itself by 1643, although the whole Taj complex took 22 years to complete." Unlike the first encyclopaedia, the latter gives us two separate periods : one of 10 to 11 years and the other of 22 years. About this latter period of 22 years we would also like to know why the mausoleum needed a building complex containing stables and guard and

18. p. 403, *Badshahnama*, Vol. 1, line 35 'sale ayandeh.'
19. Pp. 35-36, *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*, Ibid, Vol. 15.
20. P. 756, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1964 Ed., Vol. 21.

guest rooms? Was Mumtaz still supposed to go riding, casting away the *burqa* and escorted by large cavalry contingents? Was she also expected to receive guests?

3. Tavernier's account runs completely counter to all Muslim versions which form the basis of the encyclopaedic accounts quoted above. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* account is actually an amalgam of the Tavernier and Muslim accounts inasmuch as it borrows the figures of 20,000 workmen and 22 years from Tavernier while deftly weaving in it the 11 or 12 year period fancied in Muslim accounts.

Tavernier says[21] he "witnessed the commencement and accomplishment of this great work on which they expended 22 years during which 20,000 men worked incessantly.. The cost of it has been enormous.. The scaffolding alone cost more than the entire work..."

Even presuming that Tavernier arrived in Agra in 1641, and the work began soon after his arrival there, it should have lasted from 1641 to 1663. But, Shahjahan was deposed and imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb in 1658. How then could the work of the Mumtaz mausoleum proceed until 1663, i.e. five years after his losing control of state affairs? And if, in fact, it did, what are we to make of some Muslim accounts which claim that the work had ended in 1643? Then, again, the problem of the commencement of the construction still remains hanging in the air.

4. Mr. Mohammed Din's article[22] quoted earlier asserts, "The construction of the Taj Mahal was begun in 1632 and was not completed till 1650." Here again we come across the usual vagueness. Mr. Mohammed Din seems to be sure only of the date when the building commenced. If we take 1632 as the year of commencement then what are we to make of Tavernier's assertion that the work started in his presence? Even accepting Mr. Mohammed Din's version of the date of commencement we wonder why he should remain vague and unconvinced about the date on which the mausoleum was complete? His version therefore gives us a period of 18 years with a big question mark thereafter.

21. PP. 109-111, Travels in India, Ibid.
22. The Illustrated Weekly of India dated Dec. 30, 1951

5. Yet another version estimates the Taj Mahal to have been under construction for 17 years. This is from Mr. Arora's[23] book. He says, "Shahjahan commenced building the Taj in 1631, the fourth year after his accession. Several designs were prepared by masters of the art from distant lands but it was Afandi's which was approved. From this a wooden model was constructed in 1630, the very year of Mumtaz's death. The splendid mausoleum was completed in 1648."

It is not even certain that Mumtaz died in 1630. Even assuming that she died in 1630 she perhaps died towards the close of that year. In such a case is it possible for the emperor to make a decision to build a dreamland monument, have a huge amount sanctioned for it, broadcast his scheme to distant lands, have artists prepare plans, have them sent to Shahjahan, from among which, we are told, he selected one, have a wooden model constructed, the necessary workmen collected, the bewildering variety of material ordered and construction begun, all by 1630? Is this an Arabian Nights story or history? Had Shahjahan the peace and security within two years of his accession to indulge in such a sentimental project? Can things move so fast even in the best of modern adminsitrations blessed with swift communications and any number of architectural and civil engineering schools where one can find a cluster of adept architects and engineers handy? Unfortunately such anomalies galore failed to arouse the suspicions of any historian.

6. A like version is also found in *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer*.[24] If anything, it appears to be a little more sure of itself than others. It states : "The beautiful Taj Mahal (built 1630-1648) probably the most noted mausoleum in the world..." etc. etc. All the arguments repeated above apply to this Gazetteer version too, namely, that since we are not even sure whether Mumtaz died in 1630, how could calling for mausoleum plans, selecting one, ordering the building material, etc. all be done just in one year?

These instances should suffice to give the reader an idea of the contradictions, inconsistencies, incongruities and anomalies that

23. P. 10 City of the Taj by R. C. Arora, printed at the Hiberninan Press, 15 Portuguese Church Street, Calcutta.
24. P. 19, Vol. II.

riddle all versions of the period of consturction of the Taj Mahal.

According to our contention that the ultimate truth should be able to round off all apparent contradictions into a consistent account, our explaination is that once Mumtaz was buried in the Hindu palace, the work of covering her grave mound with masonry, constructing a cenotaph and carving the Koran, dragged on desultorily and spasmodically over 10, 12, 13, 17 or 22 years. Whenever a building undergoes alterations, renovations or repairs (all very superficial in the case of the Taj Palace) drag on for years by fits and starts according to the whim of the new occupier. To this extent there is a shade of truth in the different versions quoted above.

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CHAPTER XI

TAJ MAHAL COST

LIKE THE period of construction, even the cost of the Taj Mahal has been subject to vague generalizations ranging between four and over ninety million rupees.

1. The lowest figure of the cost concerning the Mumtaz mausoleum is that of emperor Shahjahan's own official chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori. He gives us only the initial estimate but not the actual expense incurred. His figure is Rs. 40 lakhs (four million rupees).[25]

2. The *Maharashtreeya jnyankosh* figure exceeds that of Shahjahan's own chronicler by one million rupees. It tells us that the expenditure incurred on the Taj Mahal was five million rupees (Rs. 50 lakhs).[26]

3. Mr. Mohammed Din says[27] : "It is believed to have cost more than a crore and a half of rupees." That gives us the figure of over Rs. 15 million. The reader may note the rising spiral of estimate. Starting from a modest four million, we have alreay been sent aloft to a financial height of 15 million rupees in the rarefied atmosphere of ethereal accounts. Even Mr. Mohammed Din is not very sure. He contents him self with saying, "more than" Rs. 15 million.

4. According to Keene,[28] "The exact amount spent on building the Taj is nowhere recorded and the data available for even an approximate estimate is so meagre and complex that the

25. P. 40, *Badshahnama*, Vol. 1, last line.
26. Pp. [illegible] *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*, ibid., Vol. 13
27. *The Illustrated Weekly of India* dated December 30, 1951, ibid.
28. P. 154, *Keene's Handbook for Visitors to Agra and its Neighbourhood.* Rewritten and brought upto date by E. A. Duncan, Thacker's Handbook of Hindustan.

guesses hitherto made range from 500,000 to 5,000,000."

5. Sleeman has noted[29] that "The mausoleum and... all the buildings cost Rs. 3,17,48,026."

6. The *Diwan-i-Afridi,*[30] another historical work, estimates it (the expenditure) to be Rs. 9 crores and 17 lakhs (Rs. 91.7 million).

7. On the other hand, Mr. Bayard Taylor, an American who visited Agra in 1853, wrote in the *New York Herald Tribune* : "A Sheikh who takes care of the Taj told me that the Taj with its other buildings cost seven crore rupees. This is however, quite impossible. I believe the real cost is estimated at 1,750,000 which does not seem exaggerated."[31]

8. Mr. Kanwar Lal[32] writes : "Talking of the cost of the Taj there are all kinds of conjectures and accounts. One estimate puts it at 50 lakhs of rupees. This follows the mention of the figure in Abdul Hamid Lahori's *Badshahnama.* According to this historian 'the Taj was completed in 22 years under the supervision of Makramat Khan and Mir Abdul Karim, and the total cost was fifty lakhs of rupees.' This as several authorities point out is ridiculously low, even for the comparatively cheap labour and cost of material of those times.. There are others.. who accept the figure of about four and a half crore rupees as the total cost.. In his authoritative book on the Taj, Moinuddin Ahmed refers to a manuscript in which Rudradas Khazanchi - a treasurer - has given a detailed account of the expense incurred on the Taj. This is given part by part and to the last pie. The total figure amounts to Rs. 4,18,48,826, seven annas and pies six only."

The above passage claims that Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori has put the cost of the Taj Mahal at Rs. 50 Lakhs but we have already quoted Mulla Abdul Hamid as mentioning Rs. 40 lakhs ("chihal lakh roopiah") to be the amount spent on the mausoleum. Anyway this is just by way of a slight factual correction.

29. P. 54, *Rambles & Recollections of An Indian Official*, Vol. II, by Lt. Col. W. H. Sleeman, Republished by A. C. Majumdar, [illegible] Printed at Mufid-i-Am Press, Lahore.
30. P. 154. Keene's Handbook, ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. P. 10, *The Taj* by Kanwar Lal, ibid.

The version of Rudradas Khazanchi calculating the cost of the Taj Mahal to the last pie only reminds us of the wise observation of the late Sir H. M. Elliot that sycophant chroniclers added such little details from their fertile imagination to impart to their fictitious accounts a touch of reliability.

Any single aspect of the Taj Mahal like that of the cost and period of consturction discussed heretofore should be enough to convince intelligent readers how the Shahjahan legend is all a concoction from begining to end. Here we have seen how, without any basis to start with, numerous writers have indulged in irresponsible speculation in trying to figure out the real cost of the Taj Mahal incurred by Shahjahan. But they were all destined to come to grief because they have all been working with the wrong premises. Had Shahjahan really built the Taj Mahal the cost would have been on record, leaving no room or need for speculation !

Besides the actual cost of the project there is another interesting sidelight to it. Visitors to the Taj Mahal and lay readers of the Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal take it for granted in their innocence that Shahjahan must himself have financed his wife's mausoleum. But our contention that Shahjahan was a hard-hearted, stingy, lecherous monarch hardly to be bothered about or moved by the death of one of his 5,000 consorts, is amply borne out by *Guide to the Taj at Agra*.[33] The Guide remarks, "The native account of the cost of the Taj gives Rs. 98,55,426 as having been given by the Rajas and Nawabs and out of the Emperor's private treasury Rs. 86,09,760..."

There is one little grain of truth in the above report. It is that far from creating any dreamland monument for his dead wife, Shahjahan merely used the occasion as a lever to force a Hindu chieftain out of his wealthy mansion and, adding insult to injury, made many Rajas and Nawabs bear the major financial burden in giving that erstwhile palace the semblance of a tomb.

A closer examination of the two amounts mentioned above would suggest that they are fictitious. Instead of mentioning round figures

33. P. 14, *Guide to the Taj at Agra* (Compilation), printed at the Victoria Press, Lahore, by Azeezoodeen.

as having been contributed by Shahjahan and the other rulers respectively, we are confronted with two odd amounts as though they were lifted from a modern commercial balance sheet where contributions by various parties are worked out to odd rupees.

Another point to be noted is that Shahjahan's contribution may be a concocted figure. He was too proud, presumptious, haughty, overbearing, stingy, hard-headed and hard-hearted a monarch to spend even a farthing on a burial when he could extract the entire cost from other subservient rulers. Even the amount that the other rulers are supposed to have contributed seems fictitious because according to Shahjahan's own chronicle the entire cost did not exceed Rs. 4 million while the contribution of the other rulers, mentioned above, is itself almost Rs. 10 million. So the conclusion that emerges is that if at all the actual cost incurred in burying Mumtaz in a commandeered Hindu palace did amount to Rs. 4 million even that was extracted as a levy from Shahjahan's vassals and subjects. Moghul rulers considered themselves to have a divine right to live off the earings of their Hindu subjects.

Far from building the Taj Mahal at his own cost Shahjahan was so stingy, cruel and hard-hearted that he got even the minor work of Koranic carvings and sealing of superfluous chambers of the erstwhile Hindu mansion done gratis by flogging the labourers.

This is recorded on page 14 of *Guide to the Taj at Agra* (printed by Azeezoodeen in Lahore) as under : "The labour was all forced, and very little payment made in cash to the 20,000 workmen who were said to have been employed for 17 years. Even the allowance of corn was cruelly curtailed by rapacious officials placed over them."

Apart from the cruelty part of it the reader may note a little discrepancy in the above version. While Tavernier has referred to 20,000 workmen he has said that the work lasted for 22 years but the above account claims only 17 years. This is yet another instance of the confusion and bluff and bluster that surrounds the traditional accounts of the Taj since they are baseless.

Keene notes on page 154 of his *Handbook* : "The labour was forced, and but little was paid to the workmen in cash, while their daily allowance of cash was curtailed by rapacious officials. So great was their distress and so frightful the mortality among them that

they must have cursed the memory of Mumtaz and cried out in sheer despair :

"Have mercy, God, on our distress
For we die, too, with the Princess"

Since the mortality rate was high it is no wonder that every few days a new set of workmen had to be found to toil at the starvation level. It is also no wonder then that the total number of labourers on the muster roll, by the time the engraving work was over, numbered 20,000. And most of them must have died from starvation and whipping. It is also no wonder that the petty work dragged on for a period ranging between 10 and 22 years according to various accounts. All this was natural when every day of the year a body of troops had to be sent out to find workmen of the required calibre and literary and calligraphic standard, bound them and whisk them away to work without wage under the crack of the whip and gleam of menacing swords. It is no wonder then that they wailed, rebelled and either died or absconded. Could a monarch who has no money or heart to pay poor labourers their wages ever hope to build anything, much less a fabulous building like the Taj Mahal ?

The despot at whose behest they toiled to make a Hindu mansion look like a Muslim tomb hardly cared for their lives. He punished them by amputating their hands for the crime of demanding even a living wage. The hands were amputated obviously to teach them a lesson so that they may be permanently incapacitated from earning a livelihood by practising their carefully cultivated skills over generations, and of which they were justly proud and which they were not ready to waste toiling gratis for a stingy and hard-hearted alien monarch. Most of the skilled artisans being Hindus, killing or maiming them also brought Shahjahan Islamic merit according to Muslim concepts.

Maulvi Moinuddin's book too contains (on page 17) a mention of the cruelty. He says : "Some European writers have made disparaging remarks in connection with the building of the Taj. It is said that the employees suffered badly. They were reduced to starvation, and subjected to harsh treatment."

Western scholars who are easily enamoured by the

Shahjahan-Mumtaz romance story—something akin to their Romeo and Juliet legend - would be the last persons to bring in anything so harsh as to spoil their amorous, nostalgic dream of that Muslim romance by baseless accounts of Shahjahan's cruelty. The fact that they have felt compelled to record it despite their partiality and misplaced faith that carnal love and disconsolate (?) grief can produce architectural and financial wonders like the Taj Mahal, is proof enough that the European scholars have laid the charge of cruelty on first-hand contemporary information.

Even Muslim sources seem to corroborate the amputation of hands but with a little difference. They give a gentle romantic twist to the fact of Shahjahan's cruel maiming of the labourers. They suggest that Shahjahan amputated the hands of skilful artisans with the 'laudable' object that they may not lend their services to any other person for erecting a rival Taj Mahal. No one seems to have analysed this silly legend. Firstly, could a monarch with such a highly 'refined' aesthetic sense as to conceive and build the Taj ever have the heart to treacherously cute away the hands which toiled for him ? Secondly, would a monarch disconsolate in his bereavement be so stone-hearted as to maim those who built a tomb for his beloved wife ? Thirdly, is commisioning a Taj Mahal such a cheap joke that anyone with a dying wife could summon the same set of labourers and order them to build a rival Taj Mahal ? Who would have the money, similar legendary love for his wife and the power even to dream of a Taj for his own wife ? Obviously the romantic twist given to the cruel amputation is a brazen-faced concoction which passes muster with gullible visitors to the Taj Mahal, and with naive scholars. It is an attempt to shroud Shahjahan's cruelty in ordering the alterations to a Hindu mansion to be carried out gratis, in an aura of romantic nonsense. The cruelty was meant to subdue the workers who used to rebel in disgust every day at being made to toil for no return.

Incidentally Shahjahan's attempt to get the work done on meagre rations alone also leads to the conclusion that the contemplated work amounted to only engravings and other alterations to an existing building. No one can hope to build a magnificent mansion by providing a mere austere meal to the workmen and making them work under the crack of the whip and flash of the sword for 22 long years.

Another concocted legend is that Shahjahan intended to build a black marble Taj Mahal for himself on the other side of the river. As corroboration of that some shrewd guides and some gullible historians point out to the poor visitor some ruins on the other side of the river. Those are the remains of Hindu pavilions on the other side of the river when the Taj Mahal was a Hindu temple-palace. Those got destroyed during successive Muslim invasions when enemy forces forded the river to capture the Taj building complex. Now those same Hindu ruins too are claimed as Muslim construction. Since Shahjahan did not build the white marble Taj Mahal there was no question of his ever hoping, conceiving or dreaming to build a black marble Taj Mahal. In corroboration we quote Keene. On page 163 he observes, "The cenotaph of Shahjahan is conjectured to have been unsymmetrically placed here because he could not complete a mausoleum he had contemplated for himself but of this there is no reliable record." This shows that no matter which detail in the traditional Taj Mahal legend we try to pick up for closer examination it crumbles to pieces as a hopeless and atrocious concoction.

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CHAPTER XII

WHO DESIGNED, WHO BUILT THE TAJ ?

SINCE THE Taj Mahal is an ancient Hindu building, any search for its designer amongst the contemporaries of Shahjahan was bound to lead to disappointment, and so it has. Despite assiduous research and wild guesses all that has come down to us is a large medley of names all equally confusing and none qualifying for unanimous acclaim as the master-designer of that wonder monument - the Taj Mahal.

Let us here take stock of the different efforts made to identify the designer of the Taj Mahal.

1. It is worth noting that Emperor Shahjahan's court chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid makes no mention of any architect. This is but natural because he at the very outset, in describing Mumtaz's burial, admits that the mausoleum is a Hindu palace. A ready building when used for a tomb requires no fresh architect. His silence is, therefore, quite in order. Subsequent writers had no right to make their own guesses.

Keene takes special note of this omission. He says[34] : "Even though Abdul Hamid Lahori was specially instructed by Shahjahan to write the histroy of the Taj in the *Badshahnama*, his silence regarding a designer is significant."

2. The *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh* mentions only two supervisors[35] - Makamat Khan and Abdul Karim - and a few workmen. This lends great force to our contention that two supervisors were enough to get the palace altered into a tomb.

34. P. 151, *Keene's Handbook*, ibid.
35. PP. 35-36, *Maharashreeya Jnyankosh*, ibid., Vol. 15.

3. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*[36] prefers to be sweetly vague by saying that "the plans had been prepared by a council of architects" from a number of countries. It passes our comprehension how so many generations of scholars all over the world allowed themselves to be so thoroughly hypnotized by the Shahjahan legend as to be stopped short of a thorough research into all aspects of the Taj Mahal.

4. We have already seen how Bernier was silenced by being told that the designer of the Taj Mahal had already been killed by Shahjahan so that the designer may not oblige any other potentate by designing another wonder monument. We have already pointed out the absurdity of this. Moreover, even though killed, the designer's name could very well 'live' if at all there was any such person. In fact, his death would have made his name immortal.

5. According to Professor B. P. Saksena,[37] "Though there is a great unanimity among writers in the estimate of the beauty of the Taj their opinions as to its origin and style differ widely. Sleeman in his *Rambles and Recollections* makes the fantastic suggestion of its having been designed by a French engineer Austin de Bordeaux and by a ridiculous stretch of imagination identifies him with Ustad Isa. But the suggestion is not confirmed by historical evidence. Vincent Smith, relying on the testimony of Manrique, attributes the origin of the design to Geronimo Vironeo, a view which is rejected by Sir John Marshall and E. B. Havell..."

6. Keene observes,[38] "The names of the principal experts employed, headed by Mohammad Isa Afandi, are given in a Persian manuscript entitled the *Tarikh-i-Taj Mahal* possessed by the Khadims or hereditary custodians of the Taj. The authenticity of this document is somewhat questionable." The reader may therefrom note that the name Isa Afandi that is commonly paraded as that of the master designer of the Taj Mahal originates in a forged document. It was, therefore, but natural nobody should believe in it.

Since this Isa is a fictitious character, his "native place is

36. P. 738, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ibid., Vol. 21.
37. *History of the Shahjahan Dehli* by Prof. B. P. Saksena.
38. P. 182, Keene's Handbook, Ibid.

given variously as Agra, Shiraz and Rum (European Turkey)," says[39] Mr. Kanwar Lal.

7. Mr. Mohammed Khan's article[40] quoted in an earlier chapter adds a new name to the contestants for the honour of designing the Taj Mahal. That name is - Ahmad Mahandis (and his three sons).

This wild chase for the architect of the Taj Mahal through a forest of rumours has proceeded merrily for over 300 years without anybody becoming the wiser for it. Tired of that unending search, scholars of history had resigned themselves to leaving it at that and quoting the several names as just so many alternatives to choose from. Thus neither in the matter of the cost, nor the period of construction, nor on the name of the designer is there any unanimity. On the other hand, a wide variety of alternatives is mentioned. This could only happen when the very basis of the search and research is faulty.

E. B. Havell observes, "Some Indian records of the Taj mention the name of one Mannu Beg as the principal mosaic worker, but in the list of principal workmen given by the Imperial Library Manuscript, five mosaic workers from Kanauj all with Hindu names are entered.. The best Agra mosaic workers of the present day are also Hindus..."[41]

The above passage is very revealing in many respects. It highlights the utter confusion that prevails about the designers and workmen connected with the Taj Mahal. Such confusion arises only because of repeated attempts over generations to fill in the blanks in a fictitious story with a view to make a cogent account. Such attempts have resulted in European scholars trying to fill the void by crediting the artistry in the Taj to Frenchmen and Italians, while chauvinistic Muslim accounts have persisted in inserting fictitious Muslim names in the blanks. In this welter the names of Hindu architects and artisans mentioned in the Imperial Library Manuscript could well be those of the original workmen who, centuries before Shahjahan built the Taj Mahal.

39. PP. 42-43, *The Taj* by Kanwar Lal, Ibid.
40. *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, ibid.
41. P. 1047, *The 19th Century and After*, Vol. III, a monthly review edited by James Knowles, article titled *The Taj and Its Designers*

Havell's observation that "the best Agra mosaic workers of the present day are also Hindus" clearly proves a long tradition among the Hindus of an art of which the Taj Mahal is the finest specimen. It must be remembered that with the start of Muslim invasions education and training in all arts came to a dead halt. Albiruni writing about Mohammad Ghazni's inroads into India observed[42] that he ground the Hindus to dust and scattered them all over. The process begun by Alaptagin, Sabuktagin and Mohammad Ghazni, of pulverizing Indian life and culture, continued in all its fury at least until Aurangzeb. Thereafter its tempo slackened because of the resurgence of Hindu nationalist forces. In that nightmarish period Indians were ferreted out of their homes and towns like reptiles and pests off and on. What scope was there then to cultivate any art or prosecute any studies? If then the best mosaic workers in Agra are still Hindus, as testified by Havell, they could only be descendants of those who built the Taj Mahal before the advent of the Muslims in India. This lends additional force to the conclusion that the Taj Mahal is an ancient Hindu building and not a comparatively modern tomb of the Moghul times.

That the Taj Mahal is not the only monument falsely credited to Shahjahan, is apparent from another of Havell's observation. Havell says[43], "In my opinion the Delhi *pietra dura* (the figure drawing of birds inlaid in the rear wall of the royal balcony in the Diwan-i-Am, Red Fort, Delhi) has been wrongly attributed to Shahjahan's reign.. The naturalistic representation of birds and animals was a violation of Muslim law. The strict letter of (Koranic) law forbade the representation of the likeness of anything which is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath."

Since the *pietra dura* is an integral part of the Red Fort, and not an after-thought or a subsequent graft, Havell, in effect, concedes that the Red Fort in Delhi, commonly ascribed to Shahjahan, existed in pre-Muslim times when such figure-drawings were not only not taboo but considered essential decoration in royal mansions.

The authorship of the Jama Masjid in Delhi and the city of

42. Preface to *Albiruni's India* by Dr. Edward Sachau.
43. P. 1049, *The 19th Century and After*, Vol. III, Ibid.

Old Delhi itself has been wrongly credited to Shahjahan. There is not an iota of proof behind those assertions. Let anyone produce even a scrap of authentic paper from Shahjahan's court records showing that he commissioned the Taj Mahal and the other buildings ascribed to him. Had there been any such proof there would have been no need for any history scholars to advance their own guesses.

The pitiable state of Indian history in which baseless claims made in mediaeval Muslim chronicles to ancient monuments have been left unchallenged, arises from the disinterestedness of India's erstwhile British rulers to subject them to a thorough check. Since they, as rulers, manned the educational apparatus in India, no Indian dared refuse to toe the official line lest he be denied an educational degree in history and consequently be disabled from earning a living. Those not studying history were in no position to know that the Indian history being taught to generations was all perverted and distorted. Thus historians or otherwise, Indians lacked the capacity to challenge the history being taught to them.

Subconsciously the British administration in India was, however, aware of the falsification of Indian history on a very large scale. Therefore, whenever claims affecting their interest in ancient buildings were advanced they, very officiously, ordered investigations knowing full well that the result would be favourable to them. One such instance is recorded in the *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of Agra.*[44] It is a note on the Mubarak Manzil or Old Custom House, by the Joint Secretary. He records, "Having been called upon to inquire and report whether the building occupied by the Custom House in Balliganj was originally a Mohammedan mosque or not, I beg to state as follows : The building in question does not appear to have been originally a Mohammedan mosque... It would seem that the building was named Mubarak Manzil in consequence of its being the first halting place of emperor Aurangzeb after hearing the news of the victory which his troops gained in the Deccan.. There are signs extant of a small portion of the building set apart for prayer but this it will be found has always been done by the Mohammedan emperors..."

44. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of Agra*, January to June, 1878.

The words "it will be found (this) has always been done by Muhammadan emperors" are particularly noteworthy. Thus the Maharaja Mansil, referred to above, is clearly an ancient Rajput mansion occupied by the British as successors to the Moghuls. Similar inquiries conducted in the origin of all extant mediaeval monuments will clearly prove that they originated as Rajput mansions, castles and temples. By conquest and usurpation they came to be regarded as original mosques, tombs and forts built by the Muslims. Single walls capped with minars, or grave-like mounds appearing at desolate spots in fields or by roadsides throughout India are all remnants of or super-impositions on ancient Hindu monuments.

Another instance of the lack of incentive which prevented British scholars from reconstructing the history of India's mediaeval monuments, and made them acquiesce in Muslim claims, is provided in the *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of Agra,*[45] July to December 1875. That volume, describing Salimgarh, says, "In front of the artillery barracks and overlooking the great courtyard of the Diwan-i-Am, (inside Agra Fort) is a singular and apparently purposeless square building.. It is ornamented in a sort of Hinduised style, like the Jehangiri Mahal.... Tradition has nothing to say beyond giving this a name..."

Discerning scholars can get several revealing clues in the above passage. Firstly, it confesses that what are known as Salimagarh and Jehangiri Mahal are both ancient Hindu buildings because iconoclastic Muslim rulers would never tolerate Hindu ornamentation in the buildings they ordered, if any. What is more revealing is that many parts of those buildings appear superfluous and "purposeless" because those buildings were usurped. Conquerors would naturally be at a loss to explain away the significance of every single part of captured buildings according to their way of life since the buildings were built by those professing a different way of life. In spite of such glaring inconsistencies, anomalies and lacunae in the past history of every single mediaeval monument it was sheer intellectual inertia arising from lack of incentive which prevented British scholars from inquiring into and writing

45. P. 14 of the volume.

the true history of India's mediaeval monuments. Indian scholars being subservient to the British dared not deviate from the latter's findings for fear of being denied official recognition and patronage.

A document called the *Tarikh-i-Taj Mahal* supposed to record the origin and history of the Taj Mahal, had been in the hereditary possession of the caretakers of that monument. According to newspaper reports that document has now been stolen and taken to Pakistan. *Keene's Handbook*[46] states, "The authenticity of this document is somewhat questionable." Obviously he has used the word "somewhat" out of a sense of modesty and caution. What he actually meant to convey was that the document was an outright forgery. Even ordinary judgement should tell us that the need for a forged document arises only when a false claim is to be staked. Had the Taj Mahal been an original tomb the need for a forged document would never have arisen. The existence of such a document is substantial proof that when the Taj Mahal was taken from its rightful owners for being converted into a tomb or even earlier, its original papers were destroyed and replaced by false documents. That is why no aspect of the Taj as described in the traditional version is free from doubt and suspicion.

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46. P. 152, Keene's Handbook, Ibid

CHAPTER XIII

THE TAJ IS BUILT TO HINDU SPECIFICATIONS

HINDU PALACES of old used to be built in the midst of busy townships even as the ruler used to ride on elephant back in the very centre of his military forces arrayed on a battlefield. Even in the palace itself the ruler's own room used to be in the centre of the edifice. This aspect of Hindu custom in battle and architecture has to be taken into account when studying mediaeval monuments in India which, though they masquerade as tombs and mosques, are all ancient Hindu temples and palaces.

The Hindu king and his nobility being the chief buyers of the products of the choicest merchandise, palace complexes often provided accommodation for a bazar. This applies to the Taj Mahal, and is testified to by Tavernier.

The very term Taj Mahal means a "Crown Residence" or a "crown among residences." It does not in the least signify a tomb. A tomb and a palace are as different as heaven and earth. Had the words "Taj Mahal" the least sepulchral tinge, nobody would have dared name any hotel as "Taj Mahal Hotel," for, which tourist would like to live in a "Grave Yard Hotel"? But tourists are attracted by the name Taj Mahal precisely because the name connotes the glory and majesty of a palace or temple and not the silence and gloom of a tomb.

Mogul court record itself never uses the term Taj Mahal because it is Sanskrit Tejo-Maha-Alaya. Shahjahan merely calls the (commandeered) building his wife's tomb while Aurangzeb calls it his own mother's mausoleum. This is further emphatic proof that Shahjahan is not the author of the Taj Mahal.

That the (Hindu) Taj Mahal (palace complex) had rows of

shops forming a bazar within its precincts is recorded by Tavernier. Some of those same shops are at present occupied by a canteen and picture-postcard sellers and dealers in curios and by modellers of the Taj Mahal.

Here we must also recall that the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* lists among the ancillary buildings of the Taj Mahal complex stables, guest houses and guard rooms. All these necessarily form part of a palace but not that of a mausoleum.

Misleading notions that mediaeval buildings are Muslim constructions, simply because they appear to be tombs and mosques and because long association and tradition ascribed to them Muslim origins, got rooted in Indian history. Yet Western scholars came very near the truth in asserting that the seeming Muslim buildings were 'built' with columns, panels, beams, brackets and everything else belonging to earlier Hindu buildings. We quote a typical observation of a British scholar. He writes: "Earlier Muhammadan invaders before the Adil Shahi - under Karimuddin about 1318 had built a mosque in the fort of Bijapur, constructed out of Hindu remains. How far the pillars used there by them are taken from other buildings we are not informed. It would appear, however, that it consists partly of the portico of a Hindu temple, but this is not incompatible with the idea that other portions were removed from the original positions and readopted to their present purposes.."

The above extract shows that the truth was just round the corner and yet Western shcolars failed to grasp it. Their presumption that they were inside a Muslim tomb or mosque so smothered their reasoning faculty that they could not divine their standing inside a Hindu temple or mansion later put to Muslim use. Almost every mediaeval building, the Western scholars presume, must have been built from debris of an earlier Hindu building. This is only half the truth. It did not occur to them that ancient Hindus did not build their temples and mansions and forts from prefabricated standardized pillars, beams, brackets and panels to be freely dismantled and used elsewhere at will.

Moreover, it should be realized that no new building can be erected from the debris of an old one. Even the cost of transporting such material after demolishing an earlier building will be tremendous.

The parts would chip off and break in the process and would be useless for erecting a building of dimensions different from those of the building demolished. And who would be quixotic enough to demolish a Hindu building, transport its material to another place and re-erect a similar building from the same material ?

If a gigantic Hindu building is dismantled and all its stone slabs are transported to another place they would all get so badly mixed up that it would be a big time-consuming headache to sort them out and rearrange them to know which stone belongs to which storey and which portion. The magnitude of the problem may be realized from the fact that people who shutter their shops with planks have to number those planks and to make special markings to indicate their upper ends and inner or outer sides. Unless those planks are thus placed in their proper order the shop cannot be securely shuttered. When ordinary shuttering with readymade and well-fitting planks by a man well-versed with the job through everyday practice becomes difficult without proper markings, could huge buildings be raised in all their perfection and artistry from a medley of confused debris of a demolished building carried elsewhere ?

Moreover, even that would be impossible because presuming that the other material remains intact, would it not need a foundation ! So the simple truth is that the Muslims did not construct any building with Hindu material. They just stepped into a Hindu temple or mansion and put it to their own use by burying somebody in it, throwing away the idol, chiselling away Hindu ornamentation or plastering it over and by engraving the Koran over it. This is the reason why mediaeval Muslim tombs and mosques look so similar to Hindu temples and mansions. The same is true of the Taj Mahal.

It is a pity that presuming all these buildings to be genuinely Muslim but built in the Hindu style, Western scholars have conjured up a whole theory of Indo-Saracenic architecture and injected it under offical pressure into textbooks of history, architecture and civil engineering.

It is this untenable theory which has rapturously described the Taj Mahal as the very flower and consummation of the Indo-Saracenic

style of architecture, "a dream in marble.. a poem in stone" etc. etc. How very miserably misleading all these assumptions have been may now be gauged from our proving the Taj Mahal to be not a 17th century Muslim tomb but an ancient Shiva temple of the 12th Century A. D. later converted by Muslim conquerors into a palace, and reconquered by the Hindus. There is also another absurdity in believing that mediaeval Muslims could build mosques and tombs with stone obtained by demolishing Hindu temples and palaces. The absurdity is that mediaeval buildings are all made of brick and lime inside. Stone only forms the outer pitching. Just as one cannot steal an egg shell or a coconut shell and hope to make an egg or a coconut out of it, similarly it is absurd to assert that alien muslim rulers could strip Hindu buildings of their stone dressings, carry all that stone in a confused mass elsewhere and then rearrange all that stone to create massive, magnificent and lasting buildings out of material carved and designed by Hindus centuries earlier to suit their own shapes, patterns and uses.

We have no intention, however, of blaming the Western scholars. They were intellectual giants and pains-taking academicians, but being foreigners they had not been fully exposed to the malpractices of Muslim rule in India. As such they lacked a certain amount of personal experience of conditions in Indian history. Even then most of them, as observed by us before, came very near the truth. One such was E. B. Havell, a great architect and one endowed with a deep insight.

Havell has debunked the claim that the Taj Mahal is the product of any non-Hindu architectural style. In discussing the architecture of the Taj Mahal and the claim of some historians that an Italian named Veroneo may have been its designer, Mr. Kanwar Lal quotes Mr. Havell thus : "So if Vironeo was so deeply versed in Indian craft tradition that he could design a lotus dome after the rules laid down in the *Shilpa Shastras*, the dome itself, built by Asiatic craftsmen would not have been his. The dome of the Taj at Agra and the dome of Ibrahim's tomb (in Bijapur) both are constructed on the same principles. They are nearly of the same dimensions, and a fact unnoticed by Fergusson and his followers, the contours of both correspond exactly, except that the lotus crown of the Taj at Agra tapers more finely and the lotus petals at the springing

of the dome are inlaid instead of being sculptured. The Taj Mahal is, in fact, exactly such a building as one would expect to be created in India...... by a group of master builders inheriting the traditions of Buddhist and Hindu buildings. The plan which consists of a central domed chamber surrounded by four small domed chambers, follows the plan of an Indian pancharatna, or ''five-jewelled'' temple. Its prototype, as I have shown elsewhere, is found in the Buddhist temple of Chandi Sewa in Java.. and in the sculputured stupa shrines of Ajanta. Neither Shahjahan nor his court builders, much less an obscure Italian adventurer, can claim the whole merit of its achievement.''[47]

How very clear is Mr. Havell in his assertion that the Taj Mahal is built in the ancient Indian, Hindu style and none of Shahjahan's contemporaries could design or conceive of it. We regret that Mr. Havell was unaware of the admission in Shahjahan's own official chronicle, the *Badshahnama*, that the Taj Mahal is an ancient Hindu mansion. Had that confession come to light in his time he would have rejoiced to find his architectural conclusion fully corroborated by history, and he would then have been acknowledged as an authority on Indian architecture far superior to Percy Brown or Fergusson.

Incidentally, we would like the reader to note here the great Mr. Havell's observation that the dome itself and the inverted lotus cap over it are very ancient forms of pure Indian, Hindu architecture dealt with in the Indian *Shilpa Shastra* which originates in untraceable antiquity.

The Indian *Shilpa Shastra* in its bewildering ramifications needs to be thoroughly studied and researched. In order to present a panorama of the ancient Indian *Shilpa Shastra* we refer the reader to the chart at the end of this book, showing the branches of the ancient Indian science of engineering, as compiled by a great[48]

47. Pp. 44-45 *The Taj* by Kanwar Lal, ibid.

48. We must here record our gratitude to Mr. G. G. Joshi for lending us the said chart and an account of the late Mr. Vaze's life and work. Readers may refer to Mr. Joshi's article on Mr. Vaze in the Marathi Weekly, *Shilpa-Sansar*, Poona, dated March 26, 1965. Another article on Mr. Vaze, by Mr. V. M. Tambat, appeared in the Diwali issue of the Marathi monthly *Vishwakarma Vikas*.

indologist and engineer Raosaheb K. V. Vaze, L.C.E. That will give the reader an idea of the thousands of years of architectural penance, practice and scholarship that lie behind India's cave temples, mansions, ghats, palaces, canals, bridges and forts and one of the prettiest buildings that the ancient Hindu *Shilpa Shastra* has produced - namely the Taj Mahal. After carefully tracing the genealogical tree of the Indian *Shilpa Shastra* the reader will realise how puerile and hasty has been the notion that it was Shahjahan who commissioned the Taj Mahal.

The late Mr. K. V. Vaze, an authority on ancient Indian engineering and architecutre, was born in an indigent family on December 16, 1869.

In the year 1891 he qualifed as a Civil Engineer from the Poona Engineering College, Poona, India.

Indicating how he turned towards a study of ancient Indian architercture and engineering, Mr. Vaze once wrote in the Vedic Magazine (published from Lahore, now in Pakistan) : ''I was much surprised to find that during the whole course of my training in engineering there was no mention of any Indian author or texts or formula of engineering subjects (though) I had known eminent men admire (ancient Indian) buildings, sculptures, forts, canals, guns and pillars. I therefore made up my mind to see how the matter stands. .... I know the names of about 400 texts of which I read fifty.''

While laymen have been illogically and ignorantly assuming that the Taj Mahal is an Islamic-type building, renowned architects like the late Mr. E. B. Havell and well-known archaeologists like Mr. B. L. Dhama, a retired archaeological surveyor and ex-superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, state very positively, firmly and emphatically that the Taj Mahal is an out and out Hindu building built according to the orthodox and classic Hindu style.

In his 46 page booklet titled 'The Taj', its author Mr. Dhama observes ''Neither the name of the original designer of the Taj nor the exact amount of money spent figure in any account anywhere... Foreigners taking part in its planning lack the seal of a true and correct estimate of facts... The design of its structure is wholly indigenous in form and proportions.. The designer must

have been thoroughly versed in the lore of Hindu shastras, a veritable pundit indeed... The Taj both in body and soul is essentially Indian in conception. Indigenous in origin and savouring but little of extraneous or outside influence... One has only got to see that it bears the stamp of a culture and outlook wholly native to the core... Three phases (namely square, octagonal and circular) represent the aspects of creation, preservation and death which in turn is symbolic of the Holy Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.... The architecture of the Taj is derived from the Lotus - the most sacred flower of the Hindus.. The whole architectural ornamentation and composition are indigenous and derived from their prototypes found in the ancient monuments of India which precede the time when there was nothing worth the name of Arabian, Muslim or Seljuk style architecture."

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CHAPTER XIV

SHAHJAHAN WAS INNOCENT OF SOFT FEELINGS

ASCRIBING THE creation of the Taj Mahal to Shahjahan amounts to crediting him with Romeo-like constancy in love to Mumtaz, and the soft heart of an artist. Far from that, Shahajahan was a hard-hearted, haughty, conceited, bigoted, stingy, fanatical, cruel and lecherous tyrant. And Mumtaz was a perfect match for him.

Maulvi Moinuddin Ahmad says,[49] "European historians have sometimes charged Shahjahan with bigotry traced to the fountainhead of narrow-mindedness in Mumtaz."

Havell observes,[50] "The Jesuits were bitterly persecuted by Shahjahan. Only a short time before her death, Mumtaz Mahal, who was a relentless enemy of the Christians, had instigated Shahjahan to attack the Portuguese settlement in Hooghly."

In the *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of Agra* it is stated,[51] "Many times did Shahjahan invite the monks and secular priests to become Mohammedans (but when they repudiated his overtures) Shahjahan was greatly irritated and there and then ordered the priests to be executed the next day by the torture then used against the worst outlaws, that of being trampled underfoot by elephants."

Keene says, "Shahjahan surpassed all the Moghul emperors in autocratic pride, and was the first of them to safeguard the throne by murdering all possible rivals... According to Roe who

49. P. 8. *The Taj and its Environments*, 2nd Ed., printed by R. G. Bansal & Co., 339 Kassairat Bazar, Agra
50. P. 1041. *The 19th Century and After*, Ibid., Vol. III
51. Pp. viii-ix, *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of Agra* January to June, 1878, Ibid.

knew Shahjahan personally, his nature was unbending and mingled with extreme pride, and contempt of all."

Even Mulla Abdul Hamid's official chronicle of Shahjahan's reign records in connection with the conquest of Daulatabad that "Kasim Khan and Kambu brought 400 Christian prisoners, male and female, young and old, with the idols of their worship to the presence of the faith-defending emperor. He ordered that the principles of the Mohammedan religion be explained to them and they be called upon to adopt it. A few embraced the faith. But the majority in perversity and wilfulness rejected the proposal. These were distributed among the amirs, who were directed to keep these despicable wretches in rigorous confinement. So it came to pass that many of them passed from prison to hell. Such of their idols as were the likeness of the Prophet's were thrown into the Jamna, the rest were broken to pieces."

History is replete with descriptions of Shahjahan's cruelty, giving a lie to the average text-book version of his being a man of great artistic taste and a devoted husband. Cruelty was Shahjahan's congenital trait. It manifested itself from a very young age and won for him the unenviable epithet of being a scoundrel of the first water, from no less a person than his own august father, emperor Jehangir.

Shahjahan's villainy manifested itself from a very young age towards even his kith and kin, not to talk of strangers. This may be illustrated by a typical passage on page 25 of Keene's *Handbook*. He observes that Shahjahan "in open rebellion (against his own father, emperor Jehangir) seized Fatehpur Sikri, and sacked the city of Agra, where according to Della Valle, a noble Italian then on a visit to India, his army committed fearful barbarities. The citizens were compelled under torture to give up their hoarded treasures, and many ladies of quality were outraged and mutilated."

It is a great travesty and irony of Indian history that a ravager, torturer, molester, extortionist, plunderer and destroyer should be paraded and praised sky-high as a devoted husband of Mumtaz, a connoisseur of art, a patron of letters, a conceiver of beautiful buildings and the usherer of a golden age. This is an insult to the intelligence of both teachers and students of history.

In a footnote on page 38 Keene adds, "Shahjahan put to death his youngest brother Shahriar, and the two sons of his paternal uncle Daniel. He is also credited by some historians with the murder of his eldest brother, Khusru."

Shahjahan's phenomenal lechery and utter unconcern for his wife Mumtaz's health or well-being was responsible for running her to earth by inflicting on her 14 deliveries in a married life of less than 18 years resulting in her premature death. A long list of the 14 children Mumtaz had to deliver to Shahjahan in a record period of less than 18 years, until she delivered the last and death said "no more hereafter," appears in a footnote on page 37 of Keene's *Handbook*. The formidable list which reads like family planning in the reverse, is as under : 1. Hurid Nisa (daughter), born 1612, died 1615. 2. Jahanara, 1613 - a daughter with whom later Shahjahan is reported to have developed illicit sexual relations. 3. Muhammad Dara Sheko, born 1614. 4. Muhammad Shah Shuja, born 1615. 5. Roshanara, a daughter born 1616. 6. Muhammad Aurangzeb, born 1617. This Aurangzeb is a cursed name in Indian history. He followed his father Shahjahan's example of murdering or maiming all his rivals. 7. Umaid Baksh, born 1619, died 1621. 8. Suria Bano, born 1620, died 1627. 9. an unnamed son was born in 1621 and died soon after. 10. Murad Baksh, born in 1623. 11. Latfulla, born in 1626, died in the following year. 12. Daulat Afzal, born in 1627, died the following year. 13. An unnamed daughter died soon after birth in 1628. 14. Gauhara, a daughter, born in 1629. It was during this child-birth that Mumtaz died.

Here is what Emperor Jehangir has to say about his own son, Shahjahan.[52] "I directed that henceforward he (prince Shahjahan) should be called a 'Wretch', and whenever the word 'Wretch' occurs in this *Ikbalnama*, it is he who is intended... The pen cannot describe all that I have done for him nor can I recount my own grief, or mention the anguish and weakness which oppress me.... especially during these journeys and marchings which I am obliged to make in pursuit of him (a rebellious prince Shahjahan) who is no longer my son."

52. P. 281 Elliot & Dowson, *History*, ibid, Vol. VI.

Far from being a builder of anything, Shahjahan was a destroyer. Here is what his own court chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori says.[53] "It had been brought to the notice of His Majesty that during the late reign many idol temples had been begun, but remained unfinished, at Benares, the great stronghold of infidelity. The infidels were now desirous of completing them. His majesty, the defender of the faith, gave orders that at Benares, and throughout all his dominions in every place, all temples that had been begun should be cast down. It was now reported from the province of Allahabad that 76 temples had been destroyed in the district of Benares."

We draw two conclusions from the above passage. Firstly, we lay down as a general principle before students of history our conclusion that a destroyer is never a builder. Secondly, the words "cast down" or "destroyed" are to be understood in a very qualified sense namely that Hindus were ousted from their temples, their images were thrown out and the same buildings were used for mosques. It is this practice of India's alien Muslim rulers which explains why every mediaeval tomb and mosque looks like a temple or a Hindu mansion.

Mr. Kanwar Lal's book notes,[54] "Shahjahan was professedly a strict Sunni, and probably at the instigation of Mumtaz Mahal, he had renewed the destruction of Hindu temples.. He had broken down the steeple of the Christian Church at Agra..."[55] European travellers, Bernier and Manucci, describe numerous scandals connected with the private life of Shahjahan, and depict him as a despicable creature, whose only concern in life was how to indulge in bestial sensuality and monstrous lewdness. According to them the frequent fancy bazars in the palace, the maintenance of a large number of dancing girls by the state, the presence of hundreds of male servants in the seraglio, were so many objects for the satisfaction of Shahjahan's lust. Manucci says, "It would seem as if the only thing Shahjahan cared for was the search for women to serve his pleasure." He also writes about the intimacy of Shahjahan with the wives of Jafar Khan and Khalilullah Khan, and says that

53. P. 36, Elliot & Dowson, *History*, Ibid, Vol. VII.
54. Pp. 42-43, The Taj by Kanwar Lal, Ibid.
55. P. 28, Ibid.

it became so notorious that when they went to court the mendicants in loud voice cried out to Jafar Khan's wife, 'O Breakfast of Shahjahan, remember us!' and when the wife of Khalilullah Khan went by, they shouted 'O Luncheon of Shahjahan, succour us!' Bernier remarks that Shahjahan had a weakness for the flesh. Manrique speaks of Shahjahan's violating the chastity of the wife of Shayista Khan with the assistance of his daughter. Peter Mundy... talks of Shahjahan's incestuous connection with his daughter Chamani Begum... Tavernier writes in the same strain..."[56] Waris mentions the names of Akbarabadi Mahal and Fatehpuri Mahal as the two favourite slave girls of Shahjahan... By far the most shocking suggestion (is) that he had improper relations with his daughter Jahan Ara. Bernier says 'Begum Sahib, the elder daughter of Shahjahan, was very handsome and of lively parts and passionately loved by her father. Rumour has it that his attachment reached a point which it is difficult to believe, the justification of which he rested on the decision of Mullahs or doctors of law. According to them it would have been unique to deny the King the privilege of gathering fruit from the tree he had himself planted.' Vincent Smith has it that "the earliest evidence of this incestuous connection is to be found in De Laet, and that it is confirmed by Thomas Herbert."

Let us now see what the *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*[57] has to say about Shahjahan's demeanour. "Shahjahan (1628-1658) the fifth Mogul Emperor : Shahbuddin Mohammed Kirani alias Shahjahan was the son of Jahangir Salim from a Jodhpur princess. He came to the throne through the efforts of Nurjahan and Asaf Khan. While his father was alive Shahjahan rebelled against him twice or thrice but without success. On coming to the throne (1628) he killed all his (near) realtions. Defeating Shahji in 1637 he annexed the entire Ahmednagar territory. He used to take special precautions against Europeans coming to India and he never tolerated their meddling in religious affairs. On the ground that the Portuguese indulged in religious persecution Shahjahan sent an expedition against their settlement on the banks of the Hooghly, ransacked it and had all their property confiscated. He tried to capture Kandahar from the Persians but didn't succeed."

56. P. 27, Ibid.
57. P. (S)-13, *Maharashtreeya Jnyankosh*, Ibid., Vol. 20.

The above gist of Shahjahan's lechery and cruelty is enough to counter all talk of Shahjahan's having had any special attachment for Mumtaz. She was just one among the 5,000 consorts in his harem in addition to the many wives, sisters and daughters of his courtiers and subjects and slaves which he used to help himself with for immoderate sexual gratification.

Far from Mumtaz's death bereaving Shahjahan, the latter made his wife a political tool even in her death. He used her death as a convenient pretext to requisition Jaisingh's magnificent hereditary palace, thereby denuding one more Hindu of his wealth and power, since Shahjahan had a deep hatred for the Hindus.

By his very nature - stingy, conceited and lecherous Shahjahan was the last man to spend any money on such sentimental projects as building a tomb for one of the many women he flirted with whether in his harem or out of it.

Like all other so-called Muslim tombs - i.e. Hindu buildings used by them first as residences and later as burial places - the Taj Mahal too is not a single tomb but an ancient Hindu mansion reduced to an Islamic burial ground. Besides Mumtaz, Shahjahan himself lies buried by her side. But that is not all. There are two other graves in the same precincts.

Mr. Kanwar Lal observes[9], "At the other end of the Jilokhana, towards the east, there are again two buildings. These are the tombs of Satunnisa (Khanam) who was a favourite attendant of Mumtaz Mahal and who was entrusted with the task of looking after the temporary tomb of Mumtaz Mahal at Burhanpur... Similar is the tomb of Sarhandi Begum, another of Shahjahan's queens. The two structures are built exactly alike."

About Satunnisa Khanam's tomb Keene observes on page 161-162 of his Handbook, "The body said to be buried there was of Mumtaz's devoted maid. The tomb (built by Shahjahan) is said to have cost Rs. 30,000. She died a childless widow at Lahore in 1647. The quarter at Agra known as Chitti Khana (a corruption for Sati Khana) was founded by her. The tomb proper consists of a high octagonal plinth.. round a central octagonal mortuary chamber. That Taj is based on good authority, but the special assignment to her of this particular tomb has no better foundation than popular belief."

[9]. P. 69, *The Taj* by Kanwar Lal, Ibid.

That shows that like every other detail about the Taj Mahal legend even the Satunnisa Khanam tomb is a concoction. All such tomb-like mounds were erected in usurped Hindu mansions so that Hindus many not reclaim and re-use those buildings. The Muslims knew of the Hindu weakness of not disturbing or reclaiming sepulchral sites. So, erecting false oblong gravelike mounds was like posting a strong military contingent or planting a scarecrow which cost practically nothing. It was a simple device, a strategic totem to claim Hindu buildings for Islam, and it worked admirably. Now at this distance of time scholars like Keene find that the so-called tomb may not contain the stated corpse.

But there are also other details in Keene's noting which are worth close study. Firstly, who would worry about carrying a mere maid's festering corpse all the way from Lahore to Agra - a distance of about 400 miles - in those days of pedestrian transport? Secondly, why would Shahjahan spend Rs. 30,000 on it when he made thousands of labourers slave on Koranic engravings and sealing the superfluous apartments of the erstwhile Hindu mansion, without paying them even a single pie? Thirdly, how could a mere maid found a locality named Sati Khana in Agra? What does founding mean? The Sati Khana is the ancient part of Agra reserved for Hindu women going "Sati" i.e. burning themselves on the pyre of their dead husbands. This shows how Muslim history has made fabulous claims to everything in Hindusthan in the name of even lowly illiterate, burqa-covered Muslim maids, potters and water-carriers. Fourthly, its octagonal shape clearly indicates that it is an erstwhile Hindu building. Fifthly, did even the maid's lifetime wages amount to so much as Rs. 30,000 to justify that much expenditure on her tomb? Was her house worth much more if even her tomb cost Rs. 30,000? Has the emperor Shahjahan built similar tombs for all the maids of his court? Would as stingy and cruel a monarch as Shahjahan spend the princely sum of Rs. 30,000 on a mere maid's tomb? And if 5,000 harem women had a minimum retinue of 10,000 maids, could Shahjahan hope to build a Taj Mahal for each consort, and a subsidiary sepulchral annexe for every maid?

Here we would like the reader to consider whether throughout his life Shahjahan had nothing else to do except build tombs for every inmate of his harem from maid-servants to queens! And

how come that his queen, Sarhandi Begum and Mumtaz's maid are buried in identical structures? Did he want to dishonour the queen in her death by reducing her to the status of the maid servant? Or did Shahjahan want to elevate the maid Satunnisa Khanam to the royal status? The obvious explanation is that the Hindu palace complex commandeered by Shahjahan had many towers, pavilions and apartments. Since it was all a "grab and use" affair, two symmetrical apartments were used to bury a queen and a maid in, respectively.

Had Sarhandi Begum died earlier and Mumtaz later, our history books may have rapturously described a concocted romance between Shahjahan and Sarhandi Begum to justify his building of the Taj Mahal as a fabulous tomb for her. Indian histories relating to the Muslim period are, therefore, false assumptions, later stuffed with concocted descriptions to justify and explain away those fantastic, illogical, baffling and absurd assumptions.

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CHAPTER XV

SHAHJAHAN'S REIGN NEITHER GOLDEN NOR PEACEFUL

TO CONSIDER Shahjahan's reign a golden and peaceful period of history, as is commonly asserted in all accounts of his rule, enabling him to build tombs, mosques, forts and palaces galore, is a travesty of the truth. His was one of the most troubled reigns, full of pestilence, warfare and famine. That it was peaceful is asserted merely to justify the false credit given to him for constructing such magnificent buildings as the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Red Fort and the so-called Jama Masjid in Delhi.

We have already noticed how an overwhelming majority of his subjects - namely about 99 per cent non-Muslim residents of India, were subjected to beastly tyranny. They were tortured and persecuted and their temples were being constantly demolished. We have also seen how Shahjahan murdered all his relatives who could possibly lay any claim to the throne or question his autocratic rule.

Can the regime of a ruler, by any stretch of imagination, be termed a golden and peaceful period when the virtue of no woman is safe and the life and property of no man secure? Can it be a golden and peaceful period if it is full of unending wars and revolts?

Shahjahan had neither the time, money and security nor the vision to build the magnificent buildings - the Red Fort and the so-called Jama Masjid in Delhi, and the Taj Mahal in Agra.

Shahjahan did not have resources enough to raise even a scaffolding for alterations in the Hindu buildings he usurped, not to talk of his ever dreaming of raising any building of his own. We have Tavernier's testimony for this.

"The emperor Jahangir died on 27th October, 1627. [illegible]

"Shahjahan ascended the throne at Agra on 6th February 1628".[60] According to the *Alamgir Nama* of Mohammad Kazim,[61] Shahjahan lost effective control of the throne when he fell ill on 18th September 1657 and his sons rose in revolt, fighting against one another to gain the crown.

Shahjahan's reign thus lasted for 29 years and seven months.

The whole of this period was full of incessant wars, revolts, repressive campaigns and famines and the reader will find below a year to year account of Shahjahan's reign which should serve to refute effectively the traditional concept that it was a period of peace and plenty during which all that he needed to do to beguile the tedium of every hour was to make love to women and sodomic minions and raise huge buildings as though through sheer magic.

The account[62] as compiled from Elliot and Dowson's translation of extracts from *Badshahnama* by Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Shahjahannama* by Inayat Khan, *Badshahnama* by Mohammad Waris, *Amal-i-Salih* by Mohammad Kambu and *Shahjahannama* by Mohammad Sadik Khan, is as follows :

1. On the accession of Shahjahan, Jhajhar, son of Nar Singh Deo, left the capital Agra, and proceeded to Undchha, his stronghold, where he set about raising forces. A force was sent against him under Mahabat Khan Khan Khana.

2. In the campaign against Khan Jahan a battle was fought near Dholpur.

3. In the third year of the reign, 8,000 horses were sent to conquer Nasik and Tryambakeshwar.

4. Jadurai, his sons, grandsons and relations held mansabs from the imperial government. Jadurai with his two sons Ujla and Raghu and grandson Baswant were pounced upon and killed.

5. A campaign was undertaken against Nizam Shah and Khan Jahan, around Devalgaon, Baglan, Sangamner, Chugdor fort, Bheer, Shegaon, Dharangaon, Chalisgaon and Manjira fort. Mansurgarh was captured.

60. PP. 5-6, Elliot & Dowson, History, Ibid, Vol. II.
61. P. 178, ibid.
62. PP. 3-[illegible], ibid.

6. In the 4th year of the reign, Khan Jahan took to flight past Depalpur, Ujjain and Navlai. Nearly 400 Afghans and 200 Bundelas in his force were slain. Dharur fort was captured.

7. Parenda (lying between Ahmednagar and Sholapur) was attacked.

8. The fort of Situnda, about 50 miles north-east of Aurangabad, was captured.

9. Kandhar (25 miles south-west of Nanded and 75 miles east of Dharur) was taken.

10. Operations against Mohammad Adil Shah of Bijapur were undertaken in the 5th year of the reign.

11. The emperor returned to the capital, Agra from Burhanpur after a long stay, tired and angry, because Azam Khan had proved ineffective in managing the affairs in the Deccan.

12. Hugli fort was captured.

13. The fort of Galna was the scene of another campaign.

14. In the 6th year of the reign Bhagirath Bhil, chief of his tribe in Malwa, rose in revolt.

15. In this same year an extensive campaign was undertaken to destroy Hindu temples.

16. Daulatabad was conquered.

17. Kasim Khan and Kambu brought 400 Christians under guard. The prisoners including females were asked to turn Muslim or face torture and death.

18. In the 7th year of the reign, Prince Shah Shuja marched against Parenda fort. Many engagements were fought in its neighbourhood.

19. Jhajhar Singh Bundela and his son Bikramajit rose in rebellion. The campaign against them centred around Bhander, Undchha and Chauragarh fort. This campaign, like many others, is a sickening tale of brutal torture by Shahjahan's forces.

20. The fort of Jhansi was captured.

21. The imperial army was despatched to subdue the Nizamshah.

22. In the ninth year of his reign the emperor himself proceeded south to participate in the campaign to reduce Kandhar, Nanded, Udgir, Usa, Ahmednagar, Ashte, Junnar, Sangamner, Nasik, Trymbak and Masij.

23. Khan Jahan and Khan Zaman headed campaigns against Bijapur. Battles were fought at Udgir, Indapur, Bhalki, Kalyan, Dharashev, Mahuli and Lohagaon. Khan Zaman entered Bijapur territories and plundered and destroyed every inhabited place he came to.. records the *Badshahnama* of Abdul Hamid. Kolhapur was captured. Miraj and Raibag were plundered and the forts Anki, Tanki and Alka, Palka (36 miles from Daulatabad) were captured.

24. In the 10th year of the reign, the fort of Junir was captured. The pursuit of Shahu through the Dakhin across Mahuli and Muranjan led to Shahu's surrender along with the young Nizamshah. They were also required to surrender forts Junir, Trymbak, Tringalwadi, Haris, Judhan, Jund and Harsira.

25. The Bundelas rose in revolt under Prithviraj son of Jhujhar, who had escaped earlier massacres.

26. Zafar Khan, governor of Kashmir, was ordered to proceed against Tibet, with 80,000 horse and foot.

27. In the 11th year of the reign Kandahar and other forts were captured.

28. Kuch-Haju ruled by Parikshit and Kuchbihar by Lakshminarayan rose in revolt.

29. A campaign was undertaken in Baglan area comprising nine forts, 34 parganas and 1,001 villages.

30. In the 12th year of the reign Manikraj, Raja of Chetgaon was subdued.

31. A punitive expedition was sent against Sangi Bemkhal, ruler of Great Tibet, who had seized Burang in Little Tibet.

32. In the 13th year of the reign, an attacking force advanced from Sistan against Kandahar. Khanshi fort near Bust was first captured but later abandoned.

33. Prithviraj, son of Jhujhar, was captured and imprisoned in Gwalior Fort.

34. In the 14th year of the reign, an expedition was sent to chastise the rebellious Kolis and Kathis in Gujarat and against the Jam of Kathiawar.

35. Jagat Singh, son of Raja Basu of Kangra, led a revolt against the emperor.

36. In the 15th year of the reign, a campaign was launched against Jagat Singh. Mu, Nurpur and other forts were captured.

37. In the 17th year of the reign, the imperial forces had to be sent against the Raja of Palamau.

38. In the 19th year of the reign, a campaign was undertaken against Balkh and Badakshan which were keys to the acquistion of Samarkand. Murad Baksh was sent with 50,000 horse and 10,000 musketeers, rocketmen, gunners, etc. The emperor himself had to proceed to Kabul. The fort of Kahmard was captured, and Kundaz and Balkh were conquered.

39. Sadullakhan had to subdue rebellious elements in the conquered territories.

40. Aurangzeb, who had been sent to the troubled territories, had to surrender Balkh and Badakshan to Nazar Mohammad Khan, and retreat in the 20th year of Shahjahan's reign.

41. In the 22nd year of the reign the Persians advanced against Kandahar. The imperial army was sent to defend the territories, but Bust and Kandahar had to be surrendered after long and desperate battles.

42. People in the territories of Ghazni complained of total destruction of their crops and plunder of their belongings by Shahjahan's armies in the 23rd year of the reign.

43. The Tibetan campaign resulted in the subjugation of that area in the 25th year of the reign. An immense force was also despatched for the recapture of Kandahar.

44. The siege of Kandahar continued through the 26th and 27th years of the reign.

45. In the 28th year, Allami was ordered to demolish Chittor and chastise the Rana.

46. In the 29th year of his reign, a campaign was launched

for the capture of Golkonda and Hyderabad.

47. In the 20th year of his reign, Shahjahan ordered his son Aurangzeb to lead a campaign against Bijapur.

48. During this period which marked the end of Shahjahan's troubled reign the imperial army had also another irrepressible enemy in Raja Jaswant Singh.

Incessant wars, revolts and plunder with the consequent dislocation in all productive activity and destruction of all produce reduced Shahjahan's helpless subjects to acute distress. Here is a sampling of what horrors and privations they experienced.

The description is taken verbatim from Shahjahan's own official chronicler's account, namely, from the *Badshahnama* of Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori.

Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori begins the account[63] of the fourth year of Shahjahan's reign, i.e. 1630, (the very year in which Mumtaz is believed to have died) on page 338 of Vol. I. On page 362 continuing the narrative[64] of that year of the reign, he writes : "In the present year also there had been a deficiency in the bordering countries, and total want in the Dakhin and Gujarat. The inhabitants of these two countries (regions) were reduced to the direst extremity. Life was offered for a loaf, but none would buy; rank was to be sold for a cake but none would care for it; the ever bountious hand was now stretched to beg for food; and the feet which had always trodden the way of contentment walked about only in search of sustenance. For a long time dog's flesh was sold (as) goat's flesh, and the pounded bones of the dead were mixed with flour and sold. When this was discovered the sellers were brought to justice. Destitution at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour each other, and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love. The numbers of the dying caused obstructions in the roads, and every man whose dire sufferings did not terminate in death and who retained the power to move wandered off to the towns and villages of other countries. Those lands which had been famous for their fertility and plenty now retained no trace of productiveness..

63. PP. 10-25, ibid.
64. Ibid.

The emperor directed the officials in Burhanpur, Ahmedabad and the country of Surat to establish soup kitchens."

One can well imagine the diseases that may have raged because of dog's flesh being sold in place of mutton, a son's flesh eaten by his parents and pounded bones of carcasses being mixed with grain flour.

Now it is up to the reader to figure out whether, in such a year of acute distress, Shajahan would ever launch on a fabulous project like building a monument over the body of his deceased wife Mumtaz? Moreover, such distress was not peculiar to the fourth year of the reign. The author of the *Badshahnama*, in the extract quoted above, begins with the words "In the present year also" which show that famine was endemic. What monarch dare begin a massive monument in such conditions! And how would he have the money or the workmen to build an expensive memorial to love when people were dying like flies!

It should also be remembered that in the heyday of the Moghul dynasty, from Babur to Aurangzeb, Shahjahan was the only monarch who was deposed during his life-time and died a prisoner of his own son after nearly eight years of incarceration.

Had Shahjahan's reign been marked by peace and plenty, the news of his illness would not have resulted in open revolt by all his sons and other subjects. But that such unprecedented political upheaval did take place only shows how his entire household and realm was seething with trouble and discontent. Here is what the Alamgir Nama of Mohammad Kazim[65] says about the end of Shahjahan's inglorious reign : "On 8th of September 1657 the emperor Shahjahan was seized with illness. His illness lasted for a long time, and everyday he grew weaker, so that he was unable to attend to the business of the state. Irregularities of all sorts occurred in the administration, and great disturbances arose in the wide territories of Hindustan. The unworthy and frivolous Dara Shikoh considered himself heir-apparent, and notwithstanding his want of ability for the kingly office, he endeavoured with the sincere of greediness to cut the robes of imperial dignity into a shape suited for his unworthy person... Great disorder arose in the

65. PP. 178-179, ibid.

affairs of the state. Disaffected and rebellious men raised their heads in mutiny and strife on every side. Turbulent raiyats refused to pay their revenue. The seed of rebellion was sown in all directions, and by degrees the evil reached such a height that in Gujarat Murad Baksh took his seat upon the throne... Shuja took the same course in Bengal...''

If Shahjahan's reign had been the golden period that it is wrongly described to have been, such utter chaos and countrywide rebellion would never have erupted when he fell ill. The passage quoted above proves beyond all doubt that discontentment, disorder, punitive campaigns, famines, corruption, massacres and immorality marked Shahjahan's entire reign. That was why discontentment seething under his oppressive hold manifested itself throughout his realm as soon as news of his illness was known. Had his rule been wise and benevolent the news of his illness would have evoked a touching response from his subjects. Far from that even his own sons rose in open revolt. What greater indictment could there be of Shahjahan's (mis) rule! Such was not the case with India's Rajput rulers because they were good fathers, benevolent rulers and noble human beings.

Even the quick survey made above shows that in a 30-year reign Shahjahan conducted at least 48 campaigns which gives us an average of more than one and a half campaigns per year. That means Shahjahan's entire reign was marked by unceasing warfare. And yet current historical texts assert without any justification that Shahjahan's reign was a golden and peaceful period.

In addition to such incessant warfare, various regions under Shahjahan's control were often subject to famines. Far from being a peaceful and glorious period, therefore, Shahjahan's rule was one of the most horrid periods of Indian history. This knocks the bottom out of the concocted descriptions, unsupported by any evidence, documentary or circumstantial, ascribing the authorship of the so called Jama Masjid and the Red Fort in Delhi and the Taj Mahal in Agra to Shahjahan.

Tamerlain in his memoirs alludes both to old Delhi and its Jama Masjid. Tamerlain was in Old Delhi in the Chrismas of 1398, i.e. about 230 years before Shahjahan came to the throne. Tamerlain notes:[66] ''On Sunday it was brought to my notice that a great

number of infidel Hindus had assembled in the Masjid-i-Jami of Old Delhi carrying with them arms and provisions and were preparing to defend themselves.'' This gives a direct lie to the assertion that Shahjahan built the Jama Masjid and also founded Old Delhi.

Tamerlain also specifically refers to the fort of Old Delhi. He says :[67] ''With my mind no longer occupied with the destruction of the people of Delhi I took a ride round the cities. Siri is a round city. The buildings are lofty. They are surrounded by fortifications built of stone and brick, and they are very strong. Old Delhi also has a similar strong fort, but it is larger than that of Siri. From the fort of Siri to that of Old Delhi which is a considerable distance, there runs a strong wall built of stone and cement. The part called Jahanpanah is situated in the midst of the inhabited city. The fortifications of the three cities have 30 gates, seven on the south bearing towards the east, and six on the north side bearing towards the west. Siri has seven gates, four towards the outside and three on the inside towards Jahanpanah. The fortifications of Old Delhi have 10 gates, opening towards the interior and some towards the exterior of the city.. I appointed an officer to protect the Musalman quarter of the city..''

So 230 years before Shahjahan, we have his own ancestor Tamerlain meticulously referring to Old Delhi, its fort, the city gates and the Muslim localities, namely, the area around what is now the Jama Masjid. It is surprising how despite this clear description, Indian historical texts blatantly assert that all the above buildings and Old Delhi itself were raised by Shahjahan !

This is clear proof of what Sir H. M. Elliot has termed the ''impudent and interested fraud'' of medieval Muslim chroniclers.

When the founding of the city of Old Delhi, and the building of the (Red) fort of Old Delhi and the Jama Masjid of Old Delhi have been falsely ascribed to Shahjahan, as noted above, it is no wonder if the Taj Mahal in Agra too has been undeservedly credited to him.

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66. PP. 446-447, Ibid, Vol. III, translation of *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* or *Tuzak-i-Timuri*, the Autobiography of Timur.

67. PP. 447-448, Ibid.

CHAPTER XVI

BABUR LIVED IN THE TAJ MAHAL

IT IS sometimes innocently asked by history teachers that if the Taj Mahal had existed centuries before Shahjahan, how is it there are no earlier references to it. There are three anwsers to this question. Firstly, the Taj Mahal, being then a palace and not a monument open for public inspection as it now is, used to be closely guarded. It was accessible only to the elite and then only on invitation or conquest. As such one cannot expect the same prolific references to it as a tourist attraction that one comes across in these days of publicity and modern communications.

The second answer is that ancient and mediaeval India teemed with mansions, palaces and temples of bewildering and bewitching variety, so much so that being all very spectacular, one could not be distinguished from another by mere description. All that could come down to us or could be recorded by any visitor is that ''they are of indescribable beauty'' or ''wonderful, attractive, magnificent.'' For instance, in India under British rule there were about 568 native rulers. Most of them owned many beautiful, luxurious palaces. Can any description distinguish one from the other specifically? Would not those who happened to visit these palaces merely say that they were magnificent? Similarly, mediaeval chronicles are full of praise for Indian mansions and palaces, but the problem is how to tell one from the other at this distance of time? It may also be remembered that their ownership and names of localities and roads keep changing with every historical upheaval. That presents another difficulty in identifying a building which we see today with its mediaeval address and antecedents. A practical instance is provided by the description in Muslim chronicles of a magnificent Krishna temple in Mathura which Mohammad Ghazni

says could not have been completed even in 200 years, and another in Vidisha (modern Bhilsa) which could take 300 years to build. To those who ask us why we find no mention of the Taj Mahal before Shahjahan we would like to ask in turn how do those magnificent temples in Mathura and Vidisha find no mention before the Muslim invaders? The answer is simple. Either the earlier descriptions have been lost or nobody bothered to make any specific mention of them because India teemed with such temples. Even in one single city, powerful and affluent Indian rulers had at least a dozen palaces, all rivalling one another in beauty and expense. How then could one be distinguished from the other in mere recorded descriptions? The records if any would only refer to the Raja's palace - one or the other.

Despite such very good reasons for not expecting any identifiable details in earlier records of what is at present known as Taj Mahal, luckily, Babur, the founder of the Moghul dynasty in India, who was the great great grandfather of emperor Shahjahan, has left us a disarming and unmistakable description of the Taj Mahal, if only we have the inclimation and insight to grasp it. So our third answer to the question why no mention is found in earlier chronicles of the Taj Mahal and other buildings is that though many a time there is a clear mention of such buildings, our senses benumbed by traditional tutoring fail to grasp their significance. Such is the case with the Taj Mahal.

On page 192, Vol. II, of his Memoirs emperor Babur tells us:[68] ''On Thursday (May 10, 1526) afternoon I entered Agra and took up my residence at Sultan Ibrahim's palace.'' Later on page 251 Babur adds : ''A few days after the Id we had a great feast (July 11, 1526) in the grand hall, which is adorned with the peristyle of stone pillars, under the dome in the centre of Sultan Ibrahim's palace.''

It may be recalled that Babur captured Delhi and Agra by defeating Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat. As such he came to occupy the Hindu

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68. Pp. 192 and 251, *Memoirs of Zahir-Ed-Din Mohammad Babur*, Emperor of Hindustan, Vol. II, written by himself in the Chaghtai Turki. Translated by John Layden and Willam Erskine; annotated and revised by Sir Lucas King, in two volumes. Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921.

palace which Ibrahim Lodi, himself an alien conqueror, was occupying. Babur, therefore, calls the palace at Agra which he occupied as Ibrahim's palace.

In describing it Babur says that the palace is adorned with the peristyle of stone pillars. This is a clear allusion to the four white ornamental towers at the corners of the Taj Mahal plinth. He then describes a "grand hall" which is obviously the magnificent room which now houses the cenotaphs of Mumtaz and Shahjahan. Babur further tells us that in the centre it had a dome. We know that the central cenotaph chamber has a dome. It is said to be centrally situated because it is surrounded by ten rooms. Thus it is clear that Babur lived in the palace currently known as the Taj Mahal from May 10, 1526, until his death on December 26, 1530, intermittently. That means that we have a clear record of the existence of the Taj Mahal at least 100 years before the death of Mumtaz (the so-called Lady of the Taj) around 1630. Despite such a clear mention our histories and accounts of the Taj Mahal the world over blandly assert that the Taj Mahal was built as a tomb on an open plot of land by an inconsolable Shahjahan lamenting the death of his wife.

Babur's mention of the Taj Mahal is, therefore, the fifth direct proof of the Taj Mahal being an ancient palace. The first four direct proofs were : the mention by Shahjahan's own offical chronicle that the Taj Mahal was Mansingh's and Jaisingh's palace; a similar admission by Mr. Nurul Hassan Siddiqui on page 31 of his book *The City of Taj;* the statement of Tavernier on page 111 of his *Travels in India* that the cost of the scaffolding was more than that of the entire work concerning the mausoleum, and Peter Mundy's mention that the Taj was a spectacular edifice.

It may then be asked how the Taj palace which was under the occupation of Emperor Shahjahan's great great grand-father Babur, passed out of the family's possession and was owned in Shahjahan's time by Jaisingh? The explanation is that Babur's son Humayun had been bereft of all his father's (Babur's) conquests in India and had to flee a fugitive. He did return to India but died within six months of his conquest of Delhi. Soon after Babur's death, therefore, many territories, cities and buildings passed into

Hindu hands. Among these were Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and the Taj Mahal. It may be recalled that Akbar, the grandson of Babur, had to begin all over again. He had to win a decisive victory at Panipat against Hemu, a Hindu general, before he obtained possession of Delhi and Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. At that time the Taj Mahal at Agra passed into the possession of the Jaipur Hindu royal family which was later forced to lend its daughters to Akbar's harems. Mansingh, a scion of the Jaipur royal house, who was a contemporary and a vassal of Akbar, was the owner of the Taj Mahal. And according to the *Badshahnama* it was from Mansingh's grandson Jaisingh, that the Taj Mahal was commandeered for burying Mumtaz in.

Vincent Smith[68] tells us that "Babur's turbulent life came to a peaceful end in his garden palace at Agra." This again is emphatic proof that Babur died in the Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal is the only palace in Agra which had a spectacular garden. The *Badshahnama* refers to the garden as *"sabz zamini"* meaning verdant, spacious, lofty, lush garden precincts.

Babur, being a newcomer to India, still retained a nostalgic attachment to his West Asian homeland. He had, therefore, expressed a wish to be buried near Kabul. Accordingly, his body was carried there. But for this fortuitous occurrence, according to the habit of the usurping Muslims in India, he may have been buried in the Taj Mahal where he had been living at the time of his death. Had he been buried there, our histories would have lustily described Humayun's great mythical attachment to his father Babur, inducing him to "build" the Taj Mahal as a wonder tomb for Babur.

Again, if instead of Mumtaz, Shahjahan's other queen Sarhandi Begum, who at present lies buried in an outer apartment of the Taj Mahal grounds had died in 1630, she may have been buried in the central chamber of the domed, usurped Hindu mansion. In that case our histories would have contained concocted descriptions of Shahjahan's infatuation for Sarhandi Begum instead of for Mumtaz.

Thus the Taj Mahal once barely missed being turned into Babur's tomb in 1530 A. D. and once again barely missed being known to posterity as Sarhandi Begum's tomb over a hundred years later.

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68. P. 90, *Akbar the Great Moghul* by Vincent Smith

That the first Moghul emperor Babur lived and died in the Taj Mahal is further confirmed by his daughter Gulbadan Begum (Princess Rose-Body) in the chronicle titled Humayun Nama (The History of Humayun) translated into English by Annette S. Beveridge.

On pages 109 and 110 of the translated version, Gulbadan Begum records that (Babur's) "death took place on Monday, December 26, 1530. They brought out our paternal aunt and our mother on the pretence that the doctors were coming to look. All rose. They took all the begums (harem women) and my mothers to the Great House." (A footnote on page 109 describes the Great House as a palace.)

"The death was kept concealed. On Friday, December 29, 1530, Humayun mounted the throne." A footnote on page 110 says, "Babur's body was laid first in the Ram or Aram Bagh, on the opposite side of the river from the present Taj Mahal. Later it was taken to Kabul."

The above passages make it quite clear that Babur died in the Taj Mahal. When it was known that he was dead, the harem women living elsewhere were brought to the palace called The Great House, i.e. the Taj Mahal.

Later, in order that Humayum had to be crowned in the Taj Mahal, Babur's body was removed from the Taj Mahal and was carried across the Yamuna river and laid in the palace called Ram Bagh alias Aram Bagh. This explains the belief among historians and archaeologists that the Ram Bagh palace in Agra has something to do with Babur's death.

Describing the preparations being made for the wedding feast of Hindal (son of the late emperor Babur and brother of emperor Humayun) Gulbadan Begum writes, "The jewelled throne which my lady had given for the feast was placed in the forecourt of The (Mystic) House and a gold-embroidered diwan was laid in front of it, (on which) His Majesty and the dearest lady sat together...

"In the large octagonal hall (of The Mystic House) was set the jewelled throne, and above and below it were spread out hangings embroidered with gold, and wonderful strings of pearls."

The octagonal hall of the Mystic House is obviously the central octagonal hall of the Taj Mahal in which a hundred years later Shahjahan raised the tomb of Mumtaz, and in 1666 Aurangzeb buried his father emperor Shahjahan. The Taj Mahal is called the Mystic House because it originated as a Shiva temple replete with Vedic motifs. The same building was also called the Great House because it was a magnificent royal residence.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE FALSITY OF MEDIAEVAL MUSLIM CHRONICLES

SIR H. M. ELLIOT, a well known historian, has observed in the preface to his eight-volume study of numerous mediaeval Muslim chronicles that they are an "impudent and interested fraud." He fully justifies his conclusion by his comments during the study of those chronicles. Here we quote his observation regarding Muslim chronicles which purport to record for posterity events of the fourth-generation Moghul emperor, Jahangir. Lay readers and even students of history have been kept blissfully in the dark about the utter unreliability of those chronicles.

It should also be remembered that Jahangir was the father of Emperor Shahjahan whose authorship of the Taj Mahal and the famous Peacock Throne we are challenging in this book.

Sir H. M. Elliot's observations about the *Jahangirnama* apply equally forcefully to all mediaeval Muslim chronicles. They are all classic examples of gross exaggerations, false claims, suppressions of truth, and blatant misrepresentations. For instance, wherever they say that the Muslim rulers destroyed temples and built mosques, all that they mean is that they just used temples as mosques by uprooting and throwing away the icons.

Wherever Muslim chronicles claim that Muslim rulers or noblemen founded towns, built forts and constructed roads and bridges or dug wells and tanks, their claims are invariably false. They came to India to enjoy ready wealth and mansions but not to toil and build. Neither did they have the time, money, patience, security, need, acumen, skill, resources or personnel to attempt any building or construction. They do not have even a single treatise in their ancient or mediaeval literature on any architecture of their own.

All the above observations are fully illustrated in Sir H. M. Elliot's appraisal of chronicles concerning Jahangir's reign. He observes—[70]

"There are several works which profess to be the Autobiographical Memoirs of the Emperor Jahangir and there is confusion in their titles.. There are two distinct editions of the Memoirs which differ entirely from each other, Major Price translated one, Anderson wrote upon the other. It will be seen also that there are varieties of each edition.

"A few instances may as well be adduced, to show the exaggeration of the *Tarik-i-Salim-Shahi*[71]

"At page 2 of Major Price's translation it is said "On this occasion I made use of the throne prepared by my father, and enriched it at an expense without parallel, for the celebration of the festival of the year, at the entrance of the Sun into Aries. In the fabrication of the throne a sum not far short of ten krours of ashrefies, of five mithkals the ashrefy was expended in jewel alone, a krour being the term of an hundred lakhs, and a lakh being 100,000, independently of 300 mauns of gold, Hindustani measure, employed in the workmanship, each maun of Hind being equal to ten mauns of Iraq."

"The translator converts the value of jewels alone into 150 millions sterling! an incredible sum, as he justly observes; but the more sober statement of the *Tuzak-i-Jahangiri* says 'only sixty lakhs of ashrefies and fifty mauns of gold, Hindustani measure.' and there is no mention of the throne in the authentic Memoirs.

"A little below we read, 'having thus seated myself on the throne of my expectations and wishes, I caused also the imperial crown, which my father had caused to be made after the manner of that which was worn by the great kings of Persia, to be brought before me, and then, in the presence of the whole assembled Amirs, having placed it on my brows, as an omen auspicious to the stability and happiness of my reign, kept it there for the space of a full astronomical hour. On each of the 12 points of this crown was a single diamond of the value of one lakh of ashrefies

70. P. 251, Elliot & Dowson, *History*, ibid, Vol. VI
71. PP. 257-260, ibid.

of five mithkals, the whole purchased by my father with the resources of his own government, not from anything accruing to him by inheritance from his predecessors. At the point in the centre of the top part of the crown was a single pearl of four mithkals, of the value of one lakh of ashrefies, and on different parts of the same were set altogether 200 rubies of one mithkal each, and each of the value of 6,000 rupees. Altogether this superb symbol of supreme power may be valued at two millions sterling.' In the smaller work and in the authentic Memoirs, there is no mention whatever of this costly crown.

"At page 5 Jahangir says he remitted certain sources of revenue, 'which yielded to his father no less than 1600 Hindustani mauns of gold, equal to 16,000 mauns of Irak.' The Tuzak says 60 mauns Hindustani, and the authentic Memoirs give no sum.

"At page 14 he says that 'the workmanship alone of the citadel of Agra was completed at the expense of not less than 180 lakhs of ashrefies of five mithkals each.' which the translator with a note of admiration converts into 26,550,000/-. The Tuzak gives only 36 lakhs of rupees, and the authentic memoirs 35 lakhs of rupees.

"At page 15 he says that 'the temple which had been built by Raja Mansingh and which the king demolished for the purpose of raising a mosque on its ruins cost in its construction nearly 36 lakhs of five mithkals ashrefies' which as the translator says is 5,40,00,000 rupees! The Tuzak says only 8,00,000 rupees.

"At page 32 he sends to Shahzada Parwez a chaplet of pearl of the value of 5,00,000 rupees. The Tuzak says 100,000.

"At page 34 he says 'that Daulat Khan left at his death property equivalent, according to the translator, to 120,000,000/-'. The Tuzak says only 200,000 tumans of jewels besides gold and other specie.

"At page 37 he states 'that the property of his brother Daniel amounted in jewels to five crore of ashrefies, and two crore in treasure of the same currency of 63,000,000/- sterling.' The Tuzak is silent as to the amount.

"At page 51 the tiara of Himu is said 'to have been set with diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, and pearls, to the value of sixty lacs of ashrefies or 5,40,000/- sterling!' The Tuzak says only 80,000 Tumans.

"At page 67, in speaking of the preparations for the pursuit of his son Khusru, he says, '40,000 horses feeding in his own stables, and 100,000 camels were brought out and distributed.' The Tuzak has nothing on the subject.

"At page 79 he says he 'delivered to Jameil Beg 100,000 ashrefies to be distributed amongst the Badakshanians, and that the ordered 50,000 rupees to be distributed among the Durwaishes at Adjmeir.' The Tuzak gives the sum at 30,000 rupees, and mentions nothing about the donations to the Badakshanians.

"At page 88 'the jewel chest of Khossrou is said to have contained 18,000,000 sterling!' It must have been a pretty large and heavy one to have held only £ 18,000, and the Tuzak says nothing about its contents.

"After these instances of exaggeration, who will believe this valuation 'immoderately augmenting the numbers of all things.'.... There are also other additions and omissions. For instance the account of the rebellion and capture of Khusru varies in several essential particulars (in the diferent copies) and at the conclusion of these occurrences, instead of Jahangir's returning to Agra, he goes to Kabul, as he is said in all other histories to have done.

"Amongst other omissions, a very striking one is that not only is there scarcely any allusion made to his propensity to drinking but he speaks with pious horror of this disgraceful addiction of his brother Daniyal; whereas in the true Memoirs there are so many drinking bouts noticed, as in the Memoirs of Jahangir's great grandfather Babur; and the extraordinary potations to which he confesses would have shamed even that immoderate toper."

Above is just a sampling from Sir H. M. Elliot's observations made by him from time to time to prove his conclusion that Muslim chronicles are atrocious concoctions. We would like to make some observations of our own since there are many points which escaped the notice of even Sir H. M. Elliot and other discerning scholars of his type.

Every student of Muslim chronicles and visitor to mediaeval

monuments would do well to question the very basis of all assertions presented to him and carefully consider whether they are corroborated by other independent evidence and can stand the scrutiny of logic. For instance, in the extracts quoted above, it may be noted that the fort at Agra is a very ancient Hindu citadel. The amounts mentioned in Muslim chronicles as having been spent on it were merely for repairs. That expenditure was grossly magnified and mere repairs were misrepresented as actual construction of the fort. What is more, even the amount spent on those repairs was extracted from the citizenry by means of a special levy for their own future and effective suppression and slavery.

Where Jahangir is said to have destroyed Mansingh's temple and built a mosque over its ruins, all that the reader may gather from it is that Jahangir had the whole temple staff driven out or converted to Islam and a Muslim group installed to throw away the idols and use the same building for Muslim prayers. The paltry sum spent on it to uproot the image and repair the damaged flooring was grossly exaggerated and the whole operation misrepresented as the building of a mosque. This has happened throughout India in the entire millenium of Muslim rule.

Here it may also be noted that Mansingh was Jahangir's own brother-in-law and a Hindu courtier who had incurred the odium of leading military campaigns against his own relatives to consolidate Moghul rule in India. And yet Jahangir had the fanatical cheek to destroy a temple built by his own brother-in-law and staunchest of supporters. If such was the condition of one of the highest of courtiers closely related to the Muslim sovereign by blood ties, one may well imagine the plight of those Hindus who claimed neither power and position nor royal kinship.

The crowns, thrones, cities, forts, palaces, tombs and mansions which Muslim sovereigns and nobility are claimed to have constructed are all flattering concoctions falsely recorded in ink by the facile pens of fawning scribes intent on making easy money by currying royal favour.

All those were items looted, usurped, commandeered and misappropriated from pre-Muslim Hindu rulers. Muslim chroniclers assessed the value of those captured or looted townships or buildings,

perhaps bloated them a lot, and recorded them, at the same time misrepresenting that the crowns, thrones, buildings, townships, bridges, canals etc. were constructed by their respective Muslim patrons. It is such overlapping prevarication which has given us such fantastic versions that the so-called Kutub Minar was perhaps built by Kutubuddin alone or by Altmash singly or by both of them and Allauddin Khilji and Ferozshah Tughlak partly; and that the cost of the Taj Mahal may be anywhere between four and over 90 million rupees. In such cases the very basis of Muslim assertions is misleading. This the reader should be clear about in reconstructing the story of the Taj Mahal.

It may also be noted that Jahangir was the father of Shahjahan. If Jahangir, as we have noted above, has been branded as a notorious prevaricator, his son Shahjahan was worse. Shahjahan hired the services of Kamgar Khan to forge a new chronicle of Jahangir's reign three years after the latter's death, to carefully eliminate from Jahangir's own chronicle all adverse references to the rebellious Shahjahan when the latter was a prince. Testifying to this, Sir H. M. Elliot observes:[72] "He (Kamgar Khan) was at last induced to undertake it (writing a spurious history of Jahangir's reign) at the instigation of the emperor Shahjahan in the third year of his reign."

Jahangir's chronicle contains many flattering references to his father Akbar. Jahangir invariably professes to be a very obedient son overflowing with filial affection. For instance, he claims to have built a tomb for his father (which he did not). He says that when later he used to pass by his father's tomb he walked or intended (sic) to walk barefoot. Such sentimental falsehoods mushroom throughout Jahangir's chronicle of his reign. They ought to be taken as nothing more than attempts to camouflage Jahangir's atrocious behaviour as a faithless, treacherous son and a cruel despot. Akbar has himself described how Jahangir wanted to poison him. Later when Jahangir did not succeed in secretly poisoning his father Akbar, the former started an open revolt. Had he been able to make Akbar a prisoner, he would have tortured his father to death. And yet the whole of the *Jahangirnama* exudes the air of the writer having been a doting son.

72. P. 349, ibid.

Shahjahan had fully inherited this trait and had further perfected it. He had also a host of fawning scribes ready and willing to oblige him by writing any number of false accounts which would represent him as one of the most remarkable monarchs in the world. That is why we find our histories loaded with cock and bull accounts of Shahjahan having built the Taj Mahal at Agra, the Red Fort and Jama Masjid in Delhi and the city of Old Delhi itself. Students of history, scholars who teach or write history and visitors to monuments should not believe even a word of the traditional Muslim versions unless they ascertain the truth by subjecting every assertion to close logical scrutiny and corroboration by independent verifying evidence. We have, therefore, to tread warily in wading through a myriad motivated and interested myths in getting at the true antecedents of the Taj Mahal.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE 'LADY OF THE TAJ'

THERE SEEMS to be lot of confusion about the very name of Shahjahan's wife who, we are told, lies buried in the central chamber of the Taj Mahal.

It could be that the appellation "Mumtaz Mahal" got affixed to her only when she was buried in a Hindu (Crown) palace which is what the term 'Taj Mahal' signifies. So it is not the building, as is commonly asserted, which derives its name from the woman. It is vice versa, namely, that the woman derives her posthumous title from the magnificent palace in which she had her second burial.

This conclusion of ours is based on Shahjahan's own court chronicle, the *Badshahnama*, which says,[73] "On the 17th Zil-i-Kada, 1040, died Nawab Aliya Begam, in the 40th year of her age... She had borne him eight sons and six daughters...."

Maulvi Moinuddin Ahmed observes[74] that her original name was Arjumand Banu Begum.

It would now be pertinent to inquire who this so-called "lady of the Taj" was; what was her status in Shahjahan's household, what was her ancestry and how much was her worth in Shahjahan's eyes?

Arjumand Banu was the grand-daughter of Mirza Ghias Beg, the Prime Minister of Jahangir, and one of his fathers-in-law. It needs to be pointed out here that this Ghias Beg was a mere waiter in the Persian court raised to prime ministership in the Moghul court because his beautiful and influential daughter happened to become Jahangir's mistress. Thus his grand-daughter Mumtaz alias Arjumand Banu Begum was a commoner by birth.

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73. P. 27, Ibid., Vol. VII.
74. P. 3, *The Taj and its Environments*, Ibid.

Arjumand Banu's father was Khwaja Abul Hasan (also known as Yamin-ud-Daula Asaf Khan) and mother, Diwanji Begum. Born in 1594[75]. Mumtaz was married to Shahjahan in 1612. She was therefore 18 while Shajahan was 21 years of age at the time of their marriage. But she was not Shahjahan's first wife. Shahjahan's first wife, the queen, was a great grand-daughter of the ruler of Persia - Shah Ismail Safwi. Shahjahan had numerous other wives and thousands of consorts. He not only was married before taking Mumtaz as his wife but also married again after her death. In between these weddings he also used to take consorts by the hundreds into his harem. It is, therefore, futile to argue, as is traditionally done, that Shahjahan was so devoted to Mumtaz as to lose all interest in life after her death and that he, therefore, perpetuated her memory in a magnificent monument.

The ado that current historical texts make about Shahjahan's mythical infatuation for Mumtaz is not justified by the historical records of those times. Mumtaz was apparently so insignificant an inmate of a harem teeming with 5,000 females that no historian has bothered even to accurately mention the dates of her birth, death or burial at Burhanpur, in the Taj garden or under the Taj Mahal dome. This is borne out by the following extract :[76] "The building of the Taj was commenced in 1630, or one year after the death of Mumtaz Mahal. The date of the completion of the building inscribed on the front gateway is 1057 (1648). It thus took 18 years to complete. The cost was three million sterling."

The above passage varies considerably in its details about Mumtaz and Taj Mahal from other accounts quoted heretofore. It implies that Mumtaz died in 1629 while others say she died in 1630 or 1631 or 1632 A. D. The figure of the cost too is altogether imaginary since it quotes no authority.

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75. Even Mumtaz's year of birth, like every other detail, seems to be fictitious. According to Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori, quoted earlier in this chapter, Mumtaz Mahal was in her fortieth year when she died. Since she died around 1630 she must have been born *circa* 1590. And yet in Maulvi Moinuddin's book the date of Mumtaz's birth is stated to be 1594.

76. P. 115, *Agra - Historical & Descriptive, with an account of Akbar & his Court and of the Modern City of Agra* by Syed Muhammed Latif (Khan Bahadur), printed at Calcutta Central Press Co. Ltd. 40 Canning St., Calcutta, 1896.

The author is wrong in believing that 1057 A. H. (1648 A.D.) inscribed on the front gateway marks the completion of the Taj Mahal. It only implies, if at all, that the Koranic engraving on the Hindu palace was completed on that date. The inscriber is vaguely silent precisely from a sense of guilt. The surmise that the Taj Mahal took 18 years to build is apparently based on this date, and is therefore wrong. The year 1630 A.D. believed to mark the commencement of the construction of the Taj Mahal is obviously mistaken because for all one knows Mumtaz may have been alive until 1632 A. D. And then it should take at least a year or two to discuss plans to make drawings, acquire land, order material, hire labour and begin construction. This version too, therefore, proves how the whole Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal is all bluff and bluster. This 18 year claim also conflicts with Tavernier's claim that the Taj Mahal took 22 years to build.

The traditional myth of Shahjahan's disconsolate grief for Mumtaz is a typical instance of arguing backwards, which is fallacious. The myth arose from the belief that Shahjahan was the builder of a grand tomb called the Taj Mahal. To prop up and sustain that falsehood, other myths were created. But the myths are mutually contradictory and inconsistent as all falsehoods are bound to be. The myth sought to be pricked here is about Shahjahan's special and exclusive attachment to Mumtaz meant to justify raising an expensive momument in her memory. Had he been so attached there would have been a mention about it in histories. But there is not a word about it anywhere. The only special romance, if any, mentioned in narratives of the Moghul court, relates to Jahangir and his consort Nurjahan. As regards Shahjahan, tradition first starts from a false premise, namely that he built the Taj Mahal as a tomb. Then to explain it away - i.e. justify the huge expense incurred on it, and its beauty - it is presumed that he must have been greatly attached to her. This is what we mean by "arguing backwards."

During the 18 years of her married life she bore 14 children of whom seven survived her. That meant in no single year was she free from pregnancy, which shows Shahjahan's utter disregard for his wife's health, so much so that Mumtaz died soon after her last delivery. She was then only 37 years old.[77] Since she died at Burhanpur her body was buried there. Had Shahjahan really cared

for her, he could have built a monument where his wife was first buried. Six months later the body was exhumed, which was a sacrilege and violation of the tenets of Islam, to be taken to Agra. As a matter of fact if the Taj Mahal took 10 to 22 years or so to build according to traditional fiction, why was the body carried to Agra from the original place of burial within six months of the death? What was the hurry?

Another interesting fact is that even in the precincts of the Taj the body was again interred in a temporary grave for another six months. Thereafter it was laid where it is supposed to lie now. These are very important facts which need to be carefully examined. Had the Taj been really built by Shahjahan over a period of 10 to 22 years employing 20,000 labourers one can imagine the heaps of building material lying all around with the large labour force wandering all over. In such circumstances would it be possible to keep the body of a dead queen right there to be trodden over by an army of humble labourers, in the dust and din of a huge project?

In our view the rational explanation is that soon after Mumtaz's death she was buried in Burhanpur - the town in which she died. Six months later when Shahjahan visualized the possiblitity of ousting Jaisingh from his resplendent hereditary palace, using the death of his wife as a lever, he kept exerting his royal pressure on or browbeating Jaisingh out of his luxurious ancestral home. Since Jaisingh could not be so easily prevailed upon, Shahjahan had the body of Mumtaz brought from Burhanpur to serve as a sort of an ultimatum. When the body itself was there as an handy asset for the emperor and the entire Muslim nobility to browbeat Jaisingh with, could he hold out any longer? He had to surrender his ancestral palace.

Within a few months its central octagonal throne chamber was dug up. Two trenches were made in the basement, and Mumtaz's exhumed body was interred in one. Above the basement in the throne chamber two cenotaphs were raised so as to be directly above the graves in the basement. The other trench in the basement was for

77. In the preceding footnote we have shown how Mulla Abdul Hamid claims that Mumtaz was in her fortieth year (and not the thirty-seventh) when she died.

Shahjahan. The cenotaph above his trench could have been completed even with that of Mumtaz because, after Shahjahan's death, he could easily be buried in the open trench in the basement without disturbing the cenotaph above. This was necessary to ensure a grand burial for himself alongside Mumtaz when he knew that none of his sons cared for him. The cenotaphs had to be erected in the throne-chamber above the basement lest, while the royal bodies lay underneath, others use the main upper chamber for temporal purpose, thereby violating their sanctity.

Niccolao Manucci, a Venetian, in his account of Shahjahan's court, to which he was a witness, says,[78] "There cannot be the least doubt that if the Portuguese had reached the court in the lifetime of Taj Mahal (i.e. Mumtaz) she would have ordered the whole of them to be cut into pieces after great tortures. All the same they did not escape a sufficient amount of suffering; some abjured their faith either from fear of torture and of death or through the desire of recovering their wives, who had been distributed by Shahjahan among his officers. Others, the most beautiful among them, were kept for the royal palace."

Thus neither by lineage, nor by any endearing qualities, physical beauty, special attachment and precedence of rank (because she was not the first wife, nor a queen in her own right) did Arjumand Banu Begum qualify for the distinction of a unique sepulchre.

Both Shahjahan and Mumtaz were, thus, extremely harsh and wicked and not the tender Romeo and Juliet type of pair that the misled public is made to believe.

In April 1974 when I negotiated with a photographer at Burhanpur for a photograph of Mumtaz's tomb there, he inquired whether I needed an exterior view of the building or of the grave inside.

That indicates that even in Burhanpur Mumtaz had been buried inside an usurped building though accounts that have come down to us have all along claimed that Mumtaz was buried in an open garden. It is apparent, therefore, that actually Mumtaz was first buried in a garden palace in Burhanpur exactly as she was buried a second time in a garden palace at Agra, namely in the Taj Mahal.

78. PP. 176-177, Storia do Mogor or Mogul India [illegible] by Niccolao Manucci.

This is yet another important detail which has been withheld from a gullible public for three long centuries. This also illustrates how historians have been accepting Muslim versions unverified and uninvestigated.

Shahjahan managed to bury Mumtaz in a ready mansion in Burhanpur first, and second time in a better mansion in Agra just to deprive the Hindus of two of their ancient palaces. Thereby Shahjahan succeeded in defiling and misappropriating two Hindu mansions in two different and distant cities with one corpse.

In both cases historical accounts glossed over the two burials by vaguely alluding to Mumtaz's burial first in a garden in Burhanpur and some months later in Mansingh's garden in Agra, carefully concealing the fact that at both places she was buried in the mansions situated in those gardens. Later, on the sly those accounts added that Shahjahan spent millions of rupees in raising the mausoleum in Agra, namely the Taj Mahal.

Had Shahjahan ever any intention to build a fabulous building over Mumtaz's body he would have done so in Burhanpur itself. He wouldn't incur double expenditure in first raising one mansion over her body in Burhanpur and later another better one in Agra and yet leaving no expense account of either. Did not Shahjahan have better or more serious things to do than trifle and fiddle with the corpse of his departed consort and keep experimenting with sepulchre-building in distant cities!

There is one other important aspect which seems to have escaped everybody's attention. There are two cenotaphs in the Taj Mahal in the name of Mumtaz and two in the name of Shahjahan, one each in the basement and upper floor respectively. Why four cenotaphs for just two corpses? Does not that little detail indicate a fraud hiding something?

At least two of the cenotaphs must be fake. If so, which ones are fake? The two cenotaphs in the name of Mumtaz were obviously raised to bury the two Shivlings (one each in the basement and the upper floor respectively). That indicates either that Mumtaz is not at all buried in the Taj Mahal or that her corpse in the basement cenotaph has been laid over the Shivling. But even the basement is two stories above the river level. Therefore Mumtaz's body could never have been buried even in the basement.

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CHAPTER XIX

THE ANCIENT HINDU TAJ EDIFICE IS INTACT

THOSE NOT able to get rid of the traditional notion of Shahjahan's sponsorship of the Taj Mahal are prone to argue, even after reading the foregoing evidence, that Shahjahan may have taken over a ready Hindu temple palace but he must have completely demolished it and erected a tomb. This is not true. The Taj Mahal as we see it today is the ancient Hindu temple palace except for four superficial changes made in it by Shahjahan. The first alteration he made was to dig the basement central chamber floor and after burying Mumtaz, raise a cenotaph. The other alteration was in the central ground floor chamber. Here two cenotaph-humps were put up by Shahjahan so that the Hindus may not reclaim the building. The third alteration made by Shahjahan was to get Koranic extracts engraved on the walls of the Hindu palace. The fourth change he made was to have many staircases, ventilators and chambers in the basement and upper floors sealed with sand, brick and lime.

From the above, the reader may have noted that Shahjahan did not make any structural change or alteration in Taj Mahal. Therefore, the reader and the visitor to the Taj Mahal should view it as nothing more or less than an ancient Hindu temple-palace complex. By mistaking it to be a Muslim tomb, visitors and readers tend to concentrate their attention on the cenotaphs, thereby failing to appreciate the building in all its vastness, majesty and grandeur.

The Taj Mahal, when viewed as a temple-palace complex, merits attention in the following manner : 1. Its focal octagonal marble edifice. This has at least four storeys in the marble structure alone. In the marble floor is a central chamber surrounded by ten chambers. The central chamber now has two cenotaphs replacing the ancient Hindu Peacock Throne, usurped by Shahjahan. Visitors in their haste

forget to go round the 10 chambers which surround the central (cenotaph) chamber. Thus in the marble structure itself, there should be 1089 rooms in the basement, 11 on the ground floor and 10 in the upper storey (i.e. the first floor) since the dome rises high above the central chamber. Thus there should be in all 1110 rooms in the three storeys of the marble palace. The fourth storey comprises of a single hall inside the hollow marble dome. That makes it a grand palace suite and not a one-room tomb as many visitors imagine it to be in their hurry.

2. The second significant feature of the Taj Mahal is the two-storied buildings on its right and left flanks. One of them is now mistaken to be a mosque and the other is explained away as a superfluous counterpart. These two were edifices for the guards and for guests and religious ceremonies.

3. Around the marble edifice is a huge redstone paved courtyard. Under it is a huge basement containing scores of rooms. The public should ask the Archaeology Department to have the basement unsealed and thrown open to the public. It is likely that the sealed rooms contain some treasure as well as idols and other tell-tale clues to the building's Hindu origin. If a small fee is levied on visitors, the collection will easily pay for the maintenance of the cleared basement.

4. At the four corners of the plinth of the marble edifice are four towers which when lighted up at night, used to set off the building in an enchanting frame. An inner spiral staircase leads up to the top of each of the four towers. Visitors to the Taj Mahal often vehemently assert that the four marble towers at the plinth corners are definitely an Islamic concept. We wish to tell them that, far from being Islamic, those towers themselves are an important Hindu characteristic. In support we quote a footnote on page 152 of Keene's *Handbook*. It says : "Cunningham writes regarding this mausoleum (i.e. Humayun tomb) that in this tomb we first see towers attached to the four angles of the main building. They form an important innovation in the Mohammedan architecture of Northern India, which was gradually improved and developed, until it culminated in the graceful minars of the Taj Mahal."

The above passage clearly says that the four pillars attached

to the corners of the Humayun tomb, and placed at the plinth corner of the Taj Mahal, are un-Islamic innovations. In other words they are of Hindu origin. This finds corroboration in the Hindu practice of raising four banana stumps as towers at the Satyanarayana Puja altar, and raising towers at the four corners of the wedding altar.

The footnote also highlights the flaw in the thinking of Western scholars like Keene and Cunningham, Percy Brown and Fergusson. While discussing the individual traits of the so-called mosques and tombs they concede that they are all un-Islamic, Hindu traits. And yet they blindly believe that the whole building is of Muslim origin. Visitors to the Taj Mahal (in Agra) and Bibi-ka-Makbara (in Aurangabad) and the Gol Gumbaz (in Bijapur) must realise that they are all misappropriated Hindu buildings and must, therefore, jettison the tutored and wrongly implanted notion that the four corner towers are an Islamic speciality. On the other hand it is a Hindu speciality. In Pilani (a town in Rajasthan) the plinth of every public well has towers at its four corners. Archaeological officials, teachers and professors of history, visitors to monuments and official guides thus seem to be ignorant of the implication of Cunningham's observation, though they consider him an 'authority'.

5. Enclosing the marble edifice and the garden in front is a redstone wall. As one faces the Taj Mahal, on the left hand side in the redstone wall is a multistoreyed well with apartments on every storey. The well used to house the palace treasury within its rooms. This arrangement came handy for jettisoning the treasure in the well if the enemy surprised the occupants. In normal times the treasure used to remain secure in the well from robbers or intruders who could not easily run away with the treasure from the narrow confines of the well spiral.

6. Along the redstone wall on the farther side opposite the marble edifice are long arched corridors.

7. As we face the marble Taj mahal from the farther side main entrance to the garden, on the right hand side outside the redstone wall is a huge quadrangle of rooms.

8. Outside the garden is a huge quadrangle with many arched corridors and scores of rooms. This huge quadrangle used to be

the reception area for royal guests arriving with huge retinues and military contingents. It is in this quadrangle that the cavalry and infantry escort accompanying courtiers, princes and rulers used to line up to make way for the important personage to alight from his mount and enter the towering garden entrance to proceed to the marble Taj temple palace.

9. Outside the redstone wall are many annexes for aides, secretaries, princes and the ruler's near relations.

10. In the eastern side of the redstone wall along the river are two huge towers containing scores of rooms in their many storeys. Sewer water now-a-days swirls in eddies around one tower, which is likely to damage its foundation in the long run.

11. In the redstone quadrangle outside the garden are hundreds of rooms and stables for infantrymen and their attendants.

12. Around this palace complex are well built rows for shop stalls which Tavernier has described as the *Tasimacan*.

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CHAPTER XX

THE TAJ MAHAL HAS HINDU DIMENSIONS

THE TAJ Mahal has temple-palace dimensions and attributes. Its numerous gateways have spiked doors. The entire building complex encloses over a thousand rooms, a multistoreyed well and pleasure pavilions.

The majestic approach, flanked by arched redstone corridors, to the Taj Mahal is typical of all Rajput, Hindu royal buildings. Many such arched corridors surround the Taj Mahal garden and the outer quadrangle. Between them they enclose hundreds of rooms used for housing the temple palace staff and also animals. Muslim myths explain them away as *Jilo-Khana* or pleasure house with the built-in absurdity that a monarch as cruel, miserly and overbearing as Shahjahan would ever condescend to erect luxury rooms for all and sundry to make merry over the tomb at which Shahjahan himself (we are told) wept bitterly day-in-and-day-out from 1630 to 1666. Such a majestic approach may still be seen outside all ancient Hindu temples, palaces and townships in Rajasthan.

Behind the temple palace was a paved river bank known as "ghat". A part of it still exists. Gateways of the Taj Mahal (now barred) opening at the rear provided for the Hindu royalty to bathe at the river and go boating.

Among the many buildings in the Taj Mahal complex is a pair of *Nakkar Khanas* (Drum Houses). Besides being entirely in the Rajput style, as at Chittor, Gwalior or Ajmer, the Drum Houses are further proof of the author's thesis. Any kind of music is strictly forbidden in Islamic religious places. Even otherwise, no drum house is ever planned to disturb the grave-yard repose of departed souls. But in Hindu temples and palaces drum houses

are an indispensable appurtenance. Drums and shehnai music used to usher in the dawn, announce royal arrivals and departures, welcome guests, proclaim festivals and rally the citizenry for royal proclamations.

We have already quoted the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to say[79] that "outside the enclosure at the south are ancillary buildings such as stables, out-houses and guard quarters."

Tavernier has also said,[80] "The Tasimacan (Taj-i-Macan, i.e. a crown mansion) is a large bazar consisting of six large courts, all surrounded with porticos under which there are chambers for the use of merchants."

On top of all those buildings are huge terraces and galleries. If visitors to the Taj Mahal realise that it is a temple palace they would no longer be content with having a hurried peep at the cenotaphs. They would then rightly want to amble along the corridors, over the terraces and inside the labyrinthine basement. Government archaeological officials, history teachers, students and lay visitors need to be properly instructed to view and study the Taj Mahal as a Hindu temple palace; only then will they be able to appreciate its real beauty and grandeur.

The locale of the Taj known as Jaisingpura and Khawaspura encompassed numerous buildings. The area around the Taj teemed with multi-storeyed buildings providing living accommodation for guards, army detachments, stewards, waiters, caterers, ushers and other paraphernalia which waits on royalty. There were, therefore, in that area a bazar, serais, guest houses, and roads connecting all these. All those buildings are mistaken to be mosques and tombs from the time of Shahjahan's annexation.

The dimensions of the Taj and its accoutrements are those of a wealthy temple palace, and not of a sombre tomb. In support of this we quote here at some length extracts from Maulvi Moinuddin's book :

"In front of the magnificent gate there is a spacious platform, 211.5 ft. in length and 86.75 ft. in width.. The plot encompassed

79. P. 758, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ibid., Vol. 21.
80. Pp. 109-111, *Travels in India*, ibid, Vol. 1.

by the four walls is a rectangle 1,860 ft. long north and south, and 1000 ft. broad east and west, with a total area of 2,06,000 sq. yds. or a little more than 42 acres. The gate is 100 ft. high.

"The entrance is 10.5 wide. The gate is made of an alloy composed of eight different metals, and is studded with brass nails hammered in. The area inside is an irregular octagon with a diagonal 41.5 ft."

Here we want to point out that the octagonal shape is a specifically traditional Hindu shape. The octagonal design is often drawn in stone powder in front of entrances to Hindu homes. Hand fans in ancient times used to be of octagonal shape. Paper lamps hung during the Deepawali festival are of an octagonal shape.

Special eight metal alloys were known to and manufactured only by Hindu smiths as is evident from the famous iron pillar in Delhi, the shaft lying in Dhar, and a number of other instances.

A tomb is open to fakirs and the poor all the 24 hours and, therefore, needs no doors studded with nails. Only a temple palace or fort door has polished brass nails hammered in for strengthening the entrance against possible intrusion.

The Maulvi further says :

"A flight of 17 steps takes one to the second storey. Going up 17 steps higher, we reach the 3rd story containing four apartments. The apartments communicate with one another by a gallery running through. At the corners of this storey there are octagonal rooms, each with four doorways and one entrance to the staircase going up.

Of the four staircases two go down to the first floor, the other two are closed (halfway through).

"Rooms at the southwestern corner have a through passage, while in the northeastern rooms the stairs are interrupted midway. A gallery affords communication between the different rooms; each passage has a branch leading to the staircase.

"A flight of stairs consisting of 34 steps brings us to the very top. Here there are four towers at the corners each containing eight doorways. The towers are crowned with cupolas topped with brass kalases."

The last word "kalases" above should be noted. This word is repeated many times in Maulvi Moinuddin's description of the Taj. The word is from Sanskrit. It could never get into the Taj premises, especially in a Muslim narrative of the Taj unless it has been hovering in the Taj in pre-Muslim Rajput tradition. "Kalas" signifies a shining pinnacle usually of brass or gold. The repeated use of the word "kalas" also proves that the monument is a pre-Muslim temple palace. The word "kalas" only occurs in connection with towering and magnificent temples, palaces and such other Hindu monuments.

It must also be noted that the four octagonal cupolas nestling around the dome are of pure Rajput shape. Those capping the four towers at the corners of the Taj Mahal's open verandah are also of an entirely Rajput design.

What about the dome, it may be asked? The presumption that the dome is a Muslim invention is baseless. To call the dome a Muslim creation amounts to linking it somehow with Prophet Mohammad's birth. What possible connection could there be between the dome as an architectural design and the origin of Islam?

In the case of the Taj Mahal we have already quoted emperor Babur, Shahjahan's court chronicle - the *Badshahnama* - and the great English author, Havell to prove that the dome is a Hindu constructional form.

The Kaba, the current central shrine of Islam, itself is not capped with a dome.

The Hindus alone have special names for eight directions namely the North, South, East, West and the other four in between them designated by the Sanskrit names - *Eeshanya, Agneya, Nairitya* and *Wayavya* - It is those which octagonal Hindu palaces and temples like the Taj Mahal indicate.

Referring to some 14 basement rooms behind the royal graves, Maulvi Moinuddin says[81] in his book, "The last two rooms have apertures peeping on to the placid stream. It was these openings that brought to light the existence of the long hidden chambers.

81. P. 37, *The Taj and its Environments*, ibid, Actually there are 22 rooms.

The mouths of the staircases were shut up with stone slabs. It is hard to find out why these underground chambers were built..."

That even a Muslim like the Maulvi is hard put to explain why the underground chambers exist in a sepulchre shows how the whole Taj legend is made up of incongruent bits. In a temple palace any number of underground chambers are not only of immense use but are indispensable. Such chambers are used to store provisions, treasure, hide friends, imprison enemies, and for ceremonies, secret talks etc. In a tomb, basement chambers are redundant.

The very fact that those chambers have been walled up and rendered unoccupiable is further proof that once the monument was converted into a tomb Shahjahan did not want visitors or caretakers to use the premises for residential purposes. Superfluous rooms of the erstwhile temple palace had therefore to be walled.

On the same page the author Maulvi Moinuddin further observes : "From the existence of the sand, apparently of the Jumna, lying thickly on the floor it might be reasonably supposed that there was a ghat or landing place on the spot, which however was disused subsequently for some unknown reason. The real object of building them remains then a "mystery".

Many such features are bound to be a "mystery" to those who study the Taj Mahal in the mistaken belief that it originated as a tomb. The entire mystery clears up into a remarkably coherent mass of meticulous detail the moment it is realised that the Taj Mahal originated as a Rajput temple palace several centuries before Shahjahan took it into his head to convert it into a tomb.

On page 38 the Maulvi says, "To the west of these chambers is a mosque which has room for a congregation of 539 souls." We wonder what significance, if any, attaches to the figure 539? This again shows that the guard room flanking the throne chamber of the temple palace is today pointed out as a mosque. Had it been a mosque it would have provided accommodation for a round figure of persons, like 1,000 or 10,000, not the odd, random figure 539.

The four marble towers at the four corners of the open verandah of the Taj Mahal were both the watch towers of the Hindu palace as well as lamp towers. At night the brightly illuminated palace

used to appear "framed" in those four towers bearing their lights high up in the dark sky.

Blind adherents of the Indo-Saracenic theory of architecture seem to be unaware that towers starting at ground or plinth level like chimneys of brick-kilns, are a speciality of indigenous ancient Indian architecture. Saracenic minarets begin from the shoulders of buildings as in mosques. And usually such minarets are not hollow from within and have no stairs. This is one of the grounds, among other voluminous evidence, which disproves traditional Muslim claims to the so-called Kutub Minar and the four towers of the Taj Mahal.

Marking every plinth, connected with service to God, the king or the public, with four towers is a universal ancient Indian custom.

Cunningham's observation that it is in Humayun's mausoleum that we first see towers attached to the four corners is typical of the naivete of British scholars. Far from realising that the so-called Humayun's tomb is an erstwhile Hindu palace in which the second-generation Moghul emperor Humayun has been probably buried they start with the assumption that the massive building was erected to mark his burial spot. Then they note its four towers and characterize them as innovations in Mohammedan architecture. And then they imagine that these towers were evolved and were progressively moved away a little bit from the main building after the death of each successive Moghul emperor so that by the time of Mumtaz's death they reached the plinth corners. If that was so, where are the missing links?

After pointing out the absurdity of the assumption of British scholars misled by the bluffs of Muslim chronicles we would like to draw the readers' attention to the grain of truth in Cunningham's observation.

Cunningham is absolutely right in noting that towers at four corners of buildings is a non-Muslim trait. If they are found at the four corners of the so-called Humayun tomb in Delhi, and at the plinth corners of the so-called Taj Mahal in Agra, that is because both are commandeered Hindu buildings put to Muslim use.

While the building on one flank of the Taj is called a mosque, that on the opposite side is justified as a useless, inexplicable symmetrical adjunct termed by the non-descript word "Jawab", meaning "reply." Thus, hard put to explain away the various parts of the Taj, fantastic explanations have been piled one over the other without any consideration to their mutual consistency or balance with the result that at the least prodding its several links fall apart.

Continuing his survey of the Taj precincts, Maulvi Moinuddin Ahmad says[82] in his book, "Adjacent to the back wall of the mosque... is the Basai tower." He is at a loss to explain its significance or purpose. The word Basai derives from a Sanskrit root signifying residence. There are many ancient towns in India, called Basai. When the Taj Mahal is known to have originated as a Rajput palace several centuries before Shahjahan, the Basai tower is easily explained as a temple palace adjunct.

Moinuddin states on page 50 of his book that "according to the *Badshahnama* the enclosure (in which the two cenotaphs are located) was completed in 10 years at a cost of Rs. 50,000. It had a door of Jasper, costing Rs. 10,000."

Obviously a tomb usually frequented by faqirs and mendicants does not need to have a jasper door. Such rich and expensive doors are meant for living monarchs or divinity, not for dead bodies.

About other buildings in the precincts, Maulvi Moinuddin's book says on page 64, "The place between the chief gate of the mausoleum and the grand portal was known as Jilo Khana... A great portion of the splendid buildings that formed once a valuable appendage to the Taj, has fallen down.... The area enclosed within the four walls of the Jilo Khana was occupied by 128 rooms of which only 76 remain. Near the garden wall there are two Khawaspuras (or enclosed compounds) each containing 32 rooms with as many vestibules for the attendants (At present the Western 'Pura' is filled with flower pots. Half of the other 'Pura' is occupied by a cowstable.)" The cowshed continuing to our own day in the Taj Mahal precincts is another clear indication of its Hindu origin.

82. P. 39, Ibid. He means the multistoreyed [illegible] tower near the river side end of the so-called mosque.

This statement needs to be carefully examined. It gives a very clear indication that the Taj precincts consisted of numerous buildings, three or four storeys high, consisting of hundreds of rooms. Accommodation on such a grand scale encompassing several hundred rooms is never part of a tomb but is always a necessity when the central building is a temple palace.

The suffix "pura" is a definite hangover of the times when the Rajputs occupied the Taj Mahal, because "pura" in Sanskrit signifies a busy locality, not the eerie silence of a graveyard.

Even the syllable "Khawas" forming part of the word "Khawaspura" has a Rajput significance, since "Khawas" were dependents of Rajput rulers. The very fact that the annexes of the Taj form part of Khawaspura proves that while the Rajput ruler lived or worshipped in the centrally situated Taj Mahal his dependents used the annexes.

Even the central basement chamber of the Taj Mahal was magnificently embellished as it should be in an expensive temple palace. But since the edifice was commandeered for conversion into a Muslim tomb, its basement had been barred under Muslim rule to non-Muslims, obviously because the secret of its non-Muslim origin should not leak out. Francis Bernier, a visitor to Shahjahan's court, was refused entry on the pretext that being a non-Muslim his entry may defile the place. Bernier testifies to our observation. He says[83], "Under the dome is a small chamber, wherein is enclosed the tomb of Taje-Mahil. It is opened with much cermony once in a year, and once only, and no Christian is admitted within, lest its sanctity should be profaned. I have not seen the interior, but I understand that nothing can be conceived more rich and magnificent." Bernier also tells us that Shahjahan was not affluent in spite of his stingy nature. Bernier notes,[84] "Shahjahan was a great economist... who... never amassed (more than) six crore rupees."

83. P. 339, *Travels in the Mogul Empire* by Francis Bernier. Translated by Irving Brock. In two volumes, William Pickering, Chancery Lane, London, [illegible]

84. P. 251, Ibid.

Wild tales of the fabulous riches of the Moguls are all hearsay. The Moguls no doubt collected huge spoils by frequently looting the Indian masses openly or by fleecing them through trumped-up usurious taxes and ransoms. Yet they could hardly retain their wealth for any length of time. It got drained off as soon as it was amassed since a vicious, corrupt and treacherous nobility had to be constantly kept in good humour and in leash by keeping their palms greased with the unction of liberally doled out wealth. The Muslim courts thus sustained themselves on a plunder and squander basis, leaving the monarch always hard-pressed for cash.

It is, therefore, unhistorical to suggest that Shahjahan who had to conduct 48 major campaigns in his less than 30 year reign and face famines, built the fabulous Taj Mahal, Old Delhi township, the Jama Masjid and the magnificent fort in Delhi - and all exclusively in the Hindu style. Then a question arises that if Shahjahan founded Old Delhi and the Fatehpuri mosque is located at a focal point in it, where was the need to build the Jama Masjid? Many such logical questions have not been considered in compiling Indian historical accounts from concocted and forged records of Muslim rule in India.

Sir H. M. Elliot gives some graphic instances of such concoctions and forgeries, in the preface to his eight-volume work. Keene found the *Tarikh-i-Taj* Mahal document a forgery. Similarly the Punjab Regional History Congress too at its 1966 session found the Malerkotla Nawab's letter to the then Mogul emperor interceding on behalf of Guru Govind Singh's two sons, a forgery.

The *Guide to the Taj at Agra* states,[85] "There are said to have been two silver doors at the entrance to the Taj..."

On page 21, Maulvi Moinuddin's book mentions that "The solid gold rail around the tomb (afterwards replaced by a network of marble) was already completed by 1632, and Shahjahan had founded a suburb to provide a revenue for the upkeep of the mausoleum and had caused hills to be made level because they might not hinder the prospect of it... These details are of special interest, as we have no other account of the Taj by an English traveller at this date."

85. P. 14, *Guide to the Taj at Agra*, Ibid.

Incidentally, the "hills" referred to above were put up for defence of the Taj temple palace by its Rajput builders. Some of these "hills" still exist near the Taj approach.

The hills were meant to prevent mangonels and catapults being hauled near enough to be able to hurl rocks on the Hindu edifice.

Besides these defensive hillocks, the Taj palace has another defensive accoutrement, that is a moat. While the Yamuna river itself serves as a moat at the rear, a dry moat may still be noticed on the eastern side of the Taj Mahal outside the redstone wall.

These defence structures also prove that the Taj Mahal originated as a temple palace and not as a tomb.

A critical study of the above passages is revealing. One talks of silver doors and the other of a gold railing enclosing the area where the cenotaphs are situated. Had these fixtures been installed by Shahjahan, there is no reason or record as to why and by whom they were removed.

Keene notes on pages 163 of his *Handbook*, "There were originally, it is said, two silver gates which cost Rs. 1,27,000". Obviously when Shahjahan took over the Hindu mansion to be turned into a Muslim tomb he removed those gates to his treasury, to be melted away.

Silver doors and gold railings are fixtures of temples and palaces, not of tombs. To believe that Shahjahan allowed these fixtures to be installed in the graveyard of his wife while he had nothing approaching them in his own palace is absurd in the extreme.

How could solid gold railings be placed around the tomb by 1632 if Mumtaz had died in 1630 or 1631 or 1632? How many years would it take to acquire a site, decide upon a design for the proposed tomb, if any, get the design made, get the foundation dug, order the building material, erect the building, order a gold railing, get it fixed and make security arrangements so that the gold may not be stolen? Could all this be done in a year or two?

We have another emphatic, incontrovertible, visible proof that far from being the product of the mythical Indo-Saracenic architecture, the Taj Mahal has been built according to the Hindu *Shilpa Shastra*.

A study of the ground plans of the Taj Mahal and of any typical Hindu temple is revealing. Note the symmetrical arrangement vertically as well as horizontally and the frame-within-frame construction with the deity or the king's apartment located in the centre. In the Hindu Taj palace the Hindu King's Peacock Throne room is in the centre while in the plan of the temple the deity's sanctum sanctorum too is in the centre.

The third characteristic is that the approach facades on all the four sides are identical. So-called Muslim tombs have such facials because they are erstwhile Hindu palaces or temples.

This identity of architectural design of the Taj Mahal with that of a Hindu temple, coupled with the great British author Havell's observation, quoted earlier, that the Taj Mahal is a Hindu construction, should leave no doubt in the reader's mind that the Taj Mahal is an ancient temple palace built to Hindu specifications. *Badshahnama* also admits that it was a domed palace.

The front garden area is almost double that of the marble Taj Palace built up area. This is what Vincent Smith describes (on page 9 of his book *Akbar the Great Mogul*) as the garden palace, in which the first Mogul emperor Babur died in 1530, i.e., a century before Shahjahan's wife (Mumtaz) died.

The same palace is described by Babur himself in his *Memoirs* as the one "adorned with a peristyle of pillars and having a dome in the centre."

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CHAPTER XXI

THE MUSLIM OVERWRITING

WHAT GREATER proof could there be of the falsity of the Shahjahan legend than that in none of the numerous inscriptions in the Taj Mahal is there any claim made of Shahjahan having commissioned it !

Besides the 14 chapters of the Koran inscribed in the Taj Mahal, there are some non-religious engravings which do not contain even the remotest allusion to Shahjahan's authorship of the Taj Mahal. Had Shahjahan really ordered the Taj Mahal, would he not in the prolific etchings made all over the walls have recorded the whole history of the fancied tomb from its conception to its completion ? Would he not have left behind for the world a clear record of his great and fabulous achievement in marble and redstone if that were a fact ?

The inscriptions in the Taj Mahal are reproduced on page 170-174 of Keene's *Handbook for Visitors to Agra*. Keene says, ''The walls and roof (of the cenotaph chamber) are profusely decorated and inscribed with tenets from the Koran encircling the archways and the spaces between them, ending with (the words) 'Written by the insignificant being, Amanat Khan Shirazi in the year 1048 Hijri and the 12th of His Majesty's reign.'' (1639 A. D.)

So the much boosted Amanat Khan Shirazi, vaunted as one of the great wonder craftsmen who built the Taj Mahal turns out to be no more than an 'insignificant' inscriber such as is found in every shop selling kitchen utensils or stoneslabs, or crying about the streets.

The cenotaph of Shahjahan's wife Mumtaz, for whom the Taj Mahal is supposed to have been commisoned by Shahjahan, also gives not even an inkling of the project in the inscription recorded on it. Keene notes ''The cenotaph (of Mumtaz) is decorated in Persian with texts from the Koran, 99 names of God and the simple

epitaph : The illustrious sepulchre of Arjumand Banu Begum called Mumtaz (Mahal), died in 1040 A. H.' (1629 A. D.).''

Had Shahjahan ordered a fabulous tomb to be erected for his wife the inscription on her cenotaph would have and should have contained some mention about it. After all, mediaeval history has all along claimed that Muslim rulers in India used to vie with one another in building fabulous tombs for themselves or their near and dear ones. This claim is of course most preposterous and goes against the very grain of normal human behaviour. Even then taking the long line of erring historians at their word, let us ask them whether those who were so keen on leaving behind wonder-tombs would not vaunt their authorship of those tombs in inscriptions ordered by them on the tombs ?

One other important point which emerges from the above inscription is that the date of Mumtaz's death is mentioned as 1629 A. D. Earlier we have noted how other historians variously claim Mumtaz to have died in 1630 or 1631 or 1632 A. D. That means that nobody seems to know when Mumtaz died. All we get to know from the various accounts is that Mumtaz died at some time between 1629-1632. A four-year speculative range for the death of a woman believed to have been the apple of the eye of emperor Shahjahan, and for whom, as the world is nose-led to believe, a fanciful mausoleum was ordered to be built forthwith, is absurd. People have not been told the whole truth of this sordid affair. They do not know that when we come to brasstacks the whole Shahjahan legend fizzles out as a monstrous concoction. She being one among 5,000 women of Shahjahan's harem Mumtaz's death was of no consequence, hence the failure to record the date of her death.

Exactly underneath Mumtaz's cenotaph, in the basement chamber, is (what is believed to be) her original grave. Keene says ''Mumtaz Mahal's epitaph is similar to that on her cenotaph.'' That is to say the inscriptions on Mumtaz's two cenotaphs are almost identical.

If Shahjahan is claimed to have been too modest to record his claim to the authorship of the Taj Mahal (though he was the most vainglorious, haughty and proud Mogul monarch) at least others should have recorded the fact after his death when ordering

inscriptions on his grave and cenotaph. But even they dared not do it. How could they when their contemporaries knew that Mumtaz and Shahjahan had been buried in a fabulous Hindu building commandeered from Jaisingh ? To us therefore the absence of any claim on Shahjahan's behalf is quite plausible.

Shahjahan died in 1666 A. D., i.e. about 35 years after his consort Mumtaz died. Keene says, "(Shahjahan's cenotaph is) inscribed in Persian with texts from the Koran together with the following epitaph : 'The illustrious sepulchre and sacred resting place of his Most Exalted Majesty, dignified as Rezwan, having his abode in Paradise and his dwelling in the starry heaven, inmate of the regions of bliss, the second Sahib Kiran, Shahjahan the King valiant. May his shrine ever flourish, and may his abode be in Heaven. He travelled from this transitory world to the world of eternity on the night of the 28th of the month of Rajab, 1076 A. H.' (1666 A. D.)."

Underneath, in the basement, Shahjahan's grave bears a shorter epitaph. It says, "The sacred sepulchre of His Most Exalted Majesty, dweller of Paradise, the second Sahib Kiran, the King Shahjahan. May his shrine ever flourish, 1076 A. H. (1666 A. D.)"

On the west of the marble building is another which is being termed as the "Mosque" eversince Shahjahan commandeered it. In its arches too are inscribed Koranic texts. Besides, says Keene, there are several marble discs inscribed with "Ya Kaffi (Oh! All Sufficent One!) and Allah (God)."

Thus in none of the several inscriptions quoted by us above is there even the faintest mention or reference to Shahjahan having commissioned the Taj Mahal. Is it ever conceivable that a regime which littered the whole building and the cenotaphs and graves with a plethora of random engravings would not vaunt its having built the great mausoleum ? The omission, along with the other evidence we have produced heretofore, is clear proof that Shahjahan only commandeered a Hindu mansion for burying his wife in and did not build anything. All the inscriptions on the Taj Mahal are of the frivolous type such as picnickers scribble on somebody else's property. The Islamic overwriting itself therefore indicates that the Taj Mahal is not Shahjahan's property.

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CHAPTER XXII

CARBON - 14 DATING OF THE TAJ MAHAL

There are three kinds of physical scientific tests currently available by which the age of historic buildings can be determined fairly accurately. Those methods are (1) Dendochronology (2) Carbon - 14 and (3) Thermoluminescence.

In Dondochronology a wood sample from an historic building is compared with the timber from trees of known antiquity.

In thermoluminescence a sample brick or brick powder obtained by drilling a hole in an ancient brick-structure can be tested to deduce the approximate year in which the brick was baked.

Since bricks (and timber) are generally bought and used soon after being marketed (and are not stored for generations like diamonds, bullion and ornaments) thermoluminescence is very helpful in determining the age of a brick-structure fairly accurately.

The carbon - C^{14} test is applicable to anything which had been part of a living organism such as a piece of bone or timber.

A living tree continues to breathe-in carbon dioxide while alive. But once it is dead the breathing-in stops and the dead piece continues to lose its carbon-dioxide (including C^{14}) content at a known rate.

A conscientious American academician who was bound to his profession of teaching history of architecture at the Pratt School of Architecture, New York happened to read my book titled THE TAJ MAHAL IS A HINDU PALACE.

He was shocked to discover that while my book had presented overwhelming evidence indicating that the Taj Mahal was an Hindu building he and his professional colleagues all the world over have been unknowingly misleading generations of students by [illegible]

describing the Taj Mahal to be a flower of Islamic architecture. His name is Marvin H. Mills. He wrote to me around 1974 asking whether I would show him round the Taj Mahal from my point of view if he visited India. I agreed. He came. I and a few friends accompanied him from Delhi to Agra.

On being taken round and explained the significance of various details he seemed to be fairly convinced. But to make sure he wanted to subject some wooden samples to scientific dating. But Government of India bureaucrats (overawed by the attitude of the bosses they serve) are determined neither to conduct any scientific tests themselves nor supply any samples to anyone else who volunteers to conduct the test for them so as to prevent a worldwide exposure of the Shahjahan-Taj Mahal hanky panky. All sections of society seem to have a stake in continuing the sham Shahjahan-Taj Mahal legend lest their gullible ignorance, research-incompetence and pathetic faith in Muslim bluffs be the butt of world ridicule for generations to come. That is why historians, archaeologists, architects, art-critics, media reporters and editors, Muslims, members of the Congress party, professors, news media persons, dramatists, writers, film-producers etc. who had been citing the Taj Mahal a monument of love all shudder at the prospect of the Shahjahan myth of the Tajmahal being blown sky high.

Therefore the problem was to obtain a wood sample in an atmosphere of total hush hush. In fact the Taj Mahal has many wooden doorways and also a bulky, solid wooden reel sandwiched between two walls on the upper story (as I dimly remember) perhaps to wind and unwind curtain strings.

I for one did not see any imperative need for a physical test in view of the weighty and comprehensive evidence that I had presented in my book.

In that state of mind when our group reached the river bank to closely examine the two-stories-high red stone rear protective wall of the Taj Mahal we noticed that near the western and eastern extremities of that wall were symmetrical doorways. The doorway at the north west was in good shape. Above that was the so-called mosque.

But the doorway near the north eastern end of the wall had been crudely walled-up with unplastered brick. Yet the upper half of its wooden panel was still in position. Being weather-beaten it had turned somewhat soft. When one of our group grasped its lower side and pulled, a sizeable piece (few inches long and broad) came off. It was that which was carried by professor Mills to New York, USA and subjected to a carbon - 14 test.

The report published in the *Itihas Patrika* (a quarterly journal, Vol. 4, No. 4 dated 31 December 1984, THANA) is reproduced hereunder.

"General Method

"Sample is converted to benzene (C_6H_6) by means of a four-step chemical process. The benzene sample is placed, with scintillator solution in a 5 ml vial and the activity is determined relative to benzene synthesized from NBS oxalic acid. The counter used is a Picker Nuclear Liquimat 220 with specially selected photomultiplier tubes (chosen for low noise level). The sample is counted for 100 minute interval along with the modern standard (NBS oxalic) and a background sample, which are counted in turn. The age is calculated from the data using the 5730-year value for the half life of 14 C. The MASCA correction referred to below is taken from the MASCA Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 1, Aug., 1973, Univ. of Pennsylvania, and is based upon the calibration of the radiocarbon time-scale by three laboratories who compared C - 14 and tree-ring ages.

"Sample 1

"Wood piece from door at North (east) end of Taj Mahal at beach level fronting on Jumna River.

"Age 1359±89 AD. Thus there is a 67% probability that the age of the sample lies between 1448 and 1270 AD.

"Note : there is a zero MASCA correction for this age.

Submitted by : Evan T. Williams
Professor of Chemistry
City University of New York,
Brooklyn College,
Brooklyn, N. Y., 11210."

Since Mumtaz died in 1631 A. D. the possible year in which that door panel was readied for use in the Tajmahal was anywhere between (1631-1448) 183 to (1631-1270) 361 years prior to Mumtaz's death.

That Carbon - 14 test, therefore, emphatically proves that the Taj Mahal had been in existence much before Shahjahan.

But here we would like to alert readers that the age deduced above is that of the particular Northeastern doorway and not of the marble Taj Mahal. As per the Sanskrit inscription to be quoted by us hereafter the Taj Mahal temple and the palace (currently dubbed as Itimad Uddaula) were constructed around 1155 A. D. when India enjoyed a long respite from Muslim invasions in the period intervening between Mohd. Ghajnavi's and Mohd. Ghori's raids. The erection of the Taj Mahal complex pre-supposes a long period of peace and affluence. Therefore until all the evidence hidden and sealed inside the seven-storied Tejomahalaya complex is examined readers may safely assume that the Tejomahalaya temple-palace complex was completed (in Raja Paramardi Dev's regime) around the middle of October in 1155 A. D. (See page 206 onwards)

During Mohd. Ghori's raids and subsequent Islamic rule from 1206 to 1857 A. D. the Tejomahalaya temple palace complex was a soft, tempting Hindu target for Muslim plunder and desecration. Much before Shahjahan umpteen Muslim raiders and rebel-claimants to the Mogul throne broke open the doors of the Taj Mahal to loot its wealth and for temporary sojourn. In that dingdong struggle the new Hindu owners had to re-fix the doors. Therefore all its doors could not be as old as the building. But since Shahjahan just usurped the Tajmahal complex by a mere brusque, unannounced imperial, confiscatory swoop all its doorways could be pre-Shahjahan but not necessarily as ancient as the Taj Mahal building itself.

On Carbon-dating the Taj Mahal, finding that even its stormed doorways preceded Shahjahan by several centuries Mr. Mills addressed the following letter to Dr. M. S. Nagaraja, Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi 110011. Copies were also forwarded to two other dealing officials of ASI Mr. B. Sengupta and Mr. Ramesh Chanda the letter dated 3rd October 1984 ran as under -

Dr. M. S. Nagaraja
Director-General
Archaeological Survey of India,
New Delhi - 110011
India.

October 3, 1984

Dear Dr. Nagaraja,

Mr. Ramesh Chanda, after speaking to Mr. R. Sengupta, has suggested that I write to you concerning a matter of important mutual interest. I am an architect and an architectural historian. My specialty is the application of scientific dating to ancient monuments wherever there is the possiblity that the accepted date of construction may need clarification after the standard means of architectural historical analysis have left some doubt.

I have been concerned with the Taj Mahal and Indian architecture for a number of years. In the light of the recent controversy over the origin of the Taj Mahal and other buildings it would seem to me to be advantageous to resolve the disputes in a definitive manner. I have the experience and the skills to accomplish this. In the pursuit of scientific truth perhaps I can be of use. In a matter of weeks I could arrange for results that would be important for India and the world.

I am involved at this time in doing the same type of investigation of the Mosque of Cordoba in Spain. I have ties with archaeometry-dating laboratories in England and the United States that I have been working with.

May I suggest that you consider the possibility of my coming some time in January of 1985. I would stay for a week. The harm to the monument would be infinitesimal. There would be some costs involved which we would have to discuss further. By February you would

have your results. The basic investigation would be of brick samples taken from, perhaps, 20 locations. The amount of each sample would be no bigger than a finger tip. The results will be reliable within 100 years on either side. The science of thermoluminescence will be employed. As a cross-check, wood samples may be taken as well.

I look forward to your response.

cc. Mr. R. Sengupta
Mr. Ramesh Chanda

Yours truly,
Marvin H. Mills

Hereunder is reproduced the reply which Mr. Marvin H. Mills received...

No. F. 23/4/84-C
GOVERMENT OF INDIA
ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
JANPATH, NEW DELHI

Shri. Marvin H. Mills A.I.A.

Architect, 21 Nov 1984
207, Woodhampton Drive,
White Plains,
NEW YORK - 10603

Dear Sir,

Please refer to your letter dated 3.10.84 addressed to Dr. M. S. Nagaraja Rao, Director General, regarding scientific dating of Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal is well dated on documentary evidence. Moreover BARC, Bombay and Physical Reserch Laboratory, Ahmedabad, are also seized of the problem and it is not considered desirable to have any further investigation at this stage. Your offer is, greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Sd/- S. P. MUKHERJEE
SUPERINTENDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL ENGINEER
for DIRECTOR GENERAL

That BARC, Bombay and PRL, Ahmedabad are seized of the problem is a questionable statement because nine years have lapsed and yet none of them has declared what tests have been carried out with what result? Since BARC Bombay and PRL Ahmedabad are limbs of the same pusillanimous administration they suffer from the same paralysis which afflicts the ASI in exposing frauds favouring Muslims.

Also the claim made in the above letter that the "Taj Mahal is well dated on documentary evidence" is a bland lie since we have shown earlier by quoting Shahjahan's own court chronicle the Badshahnama and Aurangzeb's letter that the Taj Mahal existed centuries before Shahjahan as per Mogul documents themselves.

Obviously the Government's mercenary bureaucrats lack the courage and honesty to impress on their political bosses the need to jettison the heavy load of pseudo-history that they have inherited from 600 years of Muslim rule and 200 years of British dominance.

The angry editorial comment of the Itihas Patrika quoted hereunder is therefore fully justified. It says : -

"The cover page presents the complete laboratory report of the carbon-dating test of a wooden piece from the door at the north end of Taj Mahal at beach level fronting the Jamuna river.

"The controversy of the origin of the Taj Mahal is under scrutiny for a few years past and a few independent scholars are working on it from all parts of the world. However, it seems, the Archaeology Department of Government of India is determined not to pay any heed to this problem. The reasons are obviously political and social. Is it not a shame on the part of the Government of the country, which has for its motto *'Truth alone triumphs'* ([illegible]) that it exhibits an attitude of inhibiting and suppressing the Truth? Is not the Government showing utter callousness and neglect to new researches and findings of non-partisan scholars whose findings are rather unpalatable to them? Can there be any better example of hypocrisy?

"Anyway, the programmes and search and research for "Truth" can never be stopped and suppressed for all times. Mr. Marvin Mills, a practising architect and a teacher of history of architecture in one of the architecture schools of New York, has drawn his conclusions of Age-determination of Taj Mahal by radiocarbon dating subjecting a wood sample from the north-end door of Taj Mahal, which appearing on the cover page, speaks for itself. He has visited India three times in the past. He believes that for confirming the findings, more tests are required which he is willing to carry out. As he says in his letter, he wishes to carry the tests by applying the science of thermoluminescence the most modern method used in age determinations. Mr. Mills has already conducted such tests elsewhere in the world. He has the necessary experience, the historical research background and the required laboratory facilities.

"Mr. Marvin Mills wrote a letter to the Director General Archaeological, Survey of India on 3rd Oct., 1984. He has received a reply dated 21st Nov., 1984, thanking him and appreciating his offer but saying 'it is not considered desirable to have any further investigation at this stage.'"

"Mr. Godbole of U. K. is continuing his research on this subject since 5 years. Readers of 'Itihasa Patrika' are familiar with his findings in 'London Calling'. His findings have shown how unreliable the so-called 'documentary evidence' is. Mr. Godbole says, he is open for correction, if his findings and opinions are proved otherwise.

"The tests which Mr. Marvin Mills wants to carry out are purely from an objective point of view. We have reproduced the letter of Mr. Marvin Mills and the reply sent to that letter by the Archaeological Survey of India for the information of readers."

To the above comment I would like to add that if and when a truly nationalist administration proud of its Vedic heritage comes to power in India it should first burn all the archaeological notings and notices of the ASI from the time of Alexander Cunningham (1861 A.D.) since they constitute a mound of Machiavellian machinations of alien, inimical Anglo-Muslim origin. Because it is not a question of the Taj Mahal alone. It is my deduction that at every historic site the construction is all Hindu, and destruction

all Muslim. In Muslim history destroyers and disfigurers have been tomtommed as builders. Every historic mosque and mausoleum is a captured Hindu building and every Muslim is the descendant of a captured Hindu because before 622 A. D. there was no Muslim.

I had myself addressed a letter to Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao on December 22, 1991 emphasizing the need to critically review the Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal. He apparently forwarded it to the Archaeological Survey of India.

The usual dodging, stalling reply I received from the ASI once again shamelessly repeated their stock phrase that Shahjahan's authorship of the Taj Mahal "is a well-established fact"

Their reply is reproduced hereunder -

No. 14/14/30/M
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
JANPATH, NEW DELHI

Shri P. N. Oak,
Plot No. 10,
Aundh,
Pune - 411 007

Sub : Claiming of Taj Mahal is a Temple Palace complex

Dear Sir,

Please refer to your letter dated 22nd December, 1991 regarding Taj Mahal which is claimed to be Temple Palace Complex.

The matter has been examined on several occasions in the past and as already intimated to you that, while scholars are free to express their views, it is a well established fact that Taj Mahal is built by Shah Jahan. Unless concrete and positive evidence contradicting the authorship of the monument is available, the matter does

not call any further action

Yours faithfully

(C. MARGABANDHU)

DIRECTOR (MONUMENT)

Dated 26/3/92

The blatant statement in the above, reply that "unless concrete and positive evidence contradicting (Shahjahan's) authorship of the Taj Mahal is available, the matter does not call (for) any further action" provoked me to address the following letter to the Prime Minister

P. N. Oak
Founder President,
Institute for Rewriting World History,
Plot No. 10, Goodwill Society,
Aundh, Pune 411 007
Tel : 338449

Dear Shri. Narasimha Rao,

Enclosed is a copy of my original letter to you dated December 22, 1991 and a copy of the inane reply to it vide letter no. 14/03/92, dated nil, received from C. Margabandhu Director Monument (sic).

Incidentally, you may kindly note, how, even that 10 - line reply is a monument of faulty English.

I also consider that reply to be an intellectual affront because it stigmatizes my conclusive, scientific and juridical-finding on the Taj Mahal to be a mere 'view'.

In my original letter dated 22/12/91, I have quoted two Mogul documents of Shahjahan's and Aurangzeb's courts and pointed out how the Taj Mahal is replete with Hindu Vedic temple-palace decor, and that the very term Taj Mahal doesn't even exist in any court records of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The two documents mentioned by me above, are preserved in the National Archives Library, Janpath, New Delhi. I have also

published them in my book titled 'The Taj Mahal is a Temple Palace' My research conclusion is based on over 120 points of such weighty evidence.

Instead of rebutting them point by point, this official has the temerity to fob me off with the brusque remark that Shahjahan's authorship of the Taj Mahal is a well-established fact. Who does he think he is dealing with ? Shouldn't he realize that he is not dealing with a III standard school-child but with me, a crusader - researcher, who is challenging the whole range of world history scholarship on the Taj Mahal issue, with a pile of staggering evidence, for the last 25 years ?

Yours Sincerely,

P. N. Oak

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CHAPTER XXIII

SHAHAJAHAN'S OWN ANCESTOR ADMIRED THE TAJ

While for the last 350 years the world has been blindly praising Shahajahan for having conceived and commissioned the beautiful Taj Mahal his own remote ancestor Tamerlain is on record as having been overwhelmed by the beauty of the Hindu temple palace "Tejo mahalaya."

Tamerlain alias Taimurlang invaded India 230 years before Shahjahan came to the throne.

His allusion to the Taj Mahal as a mosque is obviously an admission that the Taj Mahal alias Tejomahalaya was a Hindu temple during his time because in Islamic terminology a temple is a mosque just as a Christian father when alluding to a temple (before a Christian audience or his own child) would refer to it as a "Church" of the Hindus. Likewise he will also explain away a mosque as a "Church" of the Muslims.

The relevant reference to Tamerlain having been fascinated by the breath - taking beauty of the Taj Mahal is contained in an Arabic chronicle by Ahmed Bin Arabshah. It has been translated into English by J. H. Sanders. A copy of it is available in the Asiatic Library, Bombay.

Like all other Muslim chronicles referred to earlier the Arab chronicle too carefully shuns the term Taj Mahal alias Tejomahalaya because that is a Hindu name.

On page 222 of that Arab chronicle it is said that a temple which Tamerlain visited while in India impressed him immensely because of its captivating outline and its exquisite build. It had a fine basement inside a marble plinth. He decided then and there that his own capital Samarcand should have a similar building.

Therefore he selected a level piece of land (in Samarcand) and ordered that a similar mosque be raised for him. Mohamed Jalal was entrusted with that task.

Accordingly Mohamed Jalal raised a strong edifice of an attractive outline with four towers rising at its four corners.

We reach the following important conclusions from the above passage viz.

The general belief that pre-Shahjahan references to the Taj Mahal don't exist is belied by the above allusion to it by Shahjahan's own ancestor 230 years prior to him.

The reference to the Taj Mahal by a number of European visitors such as Peter Mundy, Tavernier and Bernier are also all of a time much before the 22 years that Shahjahan is supposed to have taken to raise the Taj Mahal from 1631 A. D. onwards. Contrarily contemporary Muslim chronicles do not at all mention the term Taj Mahal. Had Shahjahan been the originator of the Taj Mahal every contemporary Muslim chronicle would have definitely quoted the term Taj Mahal.

The other conclusion we draw is that far from the traditional belief that the concept of the Taj Mahal is of Muslim origin Tamerlain's testimony proves that it was the beauty of the Taj Mahal temple design which captivated the Muslims and made them yearn for similar buildings in their own land. But they didn't have the skills, the heart or the funds to spare for such altruistic purposes.

The third conclusion is that the belief that Muslim invaders initiated the tradition of marble buildings in India is unwarranted. All the marble buildings inside, say the Red forts in Delhi and Agra are all Hindu though they have been arbitrarily ascribed to different Muslim rulers without even an iota of any proof.

The fourth point which needs special attention is that raising four pillars at the four corners of Satyanarayan altars, of wedding altars and around public wells in Rajasthan, is an Hindu tradition.

It may also be noted that Muslim pairs of minarets are of varying heights and never symmetrical. For instance the frontside minarets are taller than the rear pair or vice versa. The towers at the four corners of the Taj Mahal marble plinth are contrarily

all of equal height.

In the Arabic chronicle mentioned above it has also been stated that the architect Mohamed Jalal was tortured to death at Tamerlain's orders. Shahjahan is also stated to have ordered the amputation of the hands of the masons he used (in desecrating the Hindu Taj Mahal) in effecting Mumtaz's (real or fake) burial inside the Taj Mahal. Had those two Muslim monarchs really got some exquisite structures raised they should have rewarded the artisans instead of ordering their torture.

The reason why Shahjahan ordered his workers to be maimed was that they resented contributing free labour for Mumtaz's burial and implantation of Koranic extracts in the Hindu Taj Mahal at the orders of a cruel, miserly Shahjahan.

The reason why Tamerlain ordered Mohamed Jalal to be tortured to death was that Jalal miserably failed in raising a proto type of the Taj Mahal in Samarcand. How could he anyway in the absence of trained architects and enough quantity of marble raise a Taj Mahal just for the whim of a blood-thirsty Tamerlain.

It has been mentioned in the same chronicle that after ordering Mohamed Jalal to raise a mosque Tamerlaine left on one of his plunder raids. When he returned he was shocked to find that his chief queen too had commissioned a lofty college (sic) just opposite, dwarfing the building ordered by Tamerlain. Unable to control his wrath at that insult Tamerlain ordered a torturous execution for Jalal. Accordingly Jalal was made to lie face down on the gorund. His two feet were tied together and he was dragged over a rugged terrain. His body in tatters Jalal met a torturous end.

Soon after Jalal's death all his wealth, women and retinue became Tamerlain's property.

One has to be very cautious in sifting the truth from a heap of such bluff and bluster of Muslim chronicles. Does it stand to reason that a cruel, rapacious Tamerlain who spent all his life in plunder would want to raise only a wonder - mosque for the riff raff to pray in but would not want to order any palaces for himself and his harem? Raising such fabulous mansions just for the heck of it was no joke.

Knowing the cruel nature of Tamerlain would his chief queen dare to arouse Tamerlain's revengeful ire by raising a stupendous college (sic) which would dwarf the mosque (sic.) opposite, which Tamerlain had commissioned?

And was raising such buildings mere child's play? Who financed the buildings? Who drew the plans? How much money was expended? Wherefrom were stones and bricks ordered? How much time did the two projects take to complete? In Samarcand is there a pair of such magnificent buildings facing each other? And why would the chief queen order a college at that and not a palace for herself? Was she an illiterate (purdhah) burqa woman or was she a table-thumping feminist and educationist?

Such close cross-questioning is essential in historical research especially in claims made by or on behalf of invaders and plunderers, womanizers, drug-addicts, drunkards and tyrants.

Our conclusion therefore is that both Tamerlain and his so called chief queen only got calligraphists to scrawl some Islamic lettering on captured earlier buildings in Samarcand and other conquered territory. Tamerlain's so-called mausoleum in Samarcand and the Shah-i-Zind monuments though disfigured with Islamic lettering are all earlier mansions, palaces and educational edifices of Vedic Kshatriya rulers.

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CHAPTER XXIV

THE TAJ MAHAL ORIGINATED AS A TEMPLE

THE TAJ edifice which Shahjahan's own chronicle (the *Badshahnama*) admits to be a Hindu mansion could have been an ancient Hindu temple. We have often wondered what determines the size of Mumtaz's cenotaph. It is neither of the average height of a Muslim woman of the 17th century nor is it of the average height of an Islamic grave. We venture to suggest that in determining the height of Mumtaz's cenotaph the height of the Hindu Shiva Linga consecrated in the Taj Mahal may have been the deciding factor. It could then be that the ancient Hindu sacred Shiva Linga itself is buried in the cenotaph while the grave in the basement may or may not contain Mumtaz's body because bodies are always buried in the earth and not on a two-storey-high stone flooring. A stone inscription known as the Bateshwar inscription kept in the Lucknow (capital of Uttar Pradesh in India) Museum indicates that the Taj Mahal could be a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, of 1155 A. D.

The inscription in Sanskrit has 34 stanzas of which stanzas 25, 26 and 34 being relevant to our topic are reproduced below :

प्रासादो वैष्णवस्तेन निर्मितोंतर्वहन्हरि मूर्ध्नास्पृशति यो
नित्यं पदमस्यैव मध्यमम् ॥ २५ ॥

अकारयच्च स्फटिकावदातमसाविदंमंदिरमिन्दुमौले :
न जातुयस्मिन्निवसन्नदेव: कैलासवासाय चकार चेत: ॥२६॥

पक्ष त्र्यक्षमुखादित्य संख्ये विक्रमसंवत्सरे आश्विन शुक्ल
पंचम्यां वासरे वासवे शिशु: ॥३४॥

Translated, these mean : "He (King Paramardi Dev or on his behalf his Minister Salakshan) raised a palace which had inside it the idol of Lord Vishnu whose feet the King used to touch with his (bowed) head.

"Similarly the King also had constructed this temple, (dedicated) to the God who bears the crescent on His (fore) head, made of crystal-white stone. Consecrated in that (magnificent) temple the Lord (was so pleased that He) never thought of repairing to His (Himalayan) abode on Mount Kailas.

"(This inscription is) dated 1212 Vikram era, Ashwin (month), Sunday, 5th day of the bright lunar fortnight."

The inscription quoted above may be found in the books* titled *Kharjurwahak alias Wartaman* (modern *Khajuraho* by D. J. Kale and on pp. 270-274 of *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.I.)

On page 124 of his book Mr. Kale states, "The above inscription found at Mauja Bateshwar, near Agra is at present in the Lucknow Museum. It is of the King Paramardi Dev, dated Vikram Samvat 1212, Ashwin (month), 5th day of the bright lunar fortnight. It has in all 34 stanzas which describe the origin of the Chandratreya (regal) dynasty and its important rulers. The inscription was found embedded in a mound at Bateshwar. It was later deposited in the Lucknow Museum by General Cunnigham, where it still is. The two beautiful marble temples which King Paramardi Dev had raised, one for Lord Vishnu and the other for Lord Shiva - were subsequently desecrated during Muslim invasions. Some clever (farsighted) person had this inscription, concerning these temples, buried in a mound. It remained buried for many years until 1900 A. D. when during excavations it was discovered by General Cunningham."

Mr. Kale, the author of the book quoted above, specifically observes that from the location where the inscription was found it appeared to have been carefully and deliberately dumped by some farsighted person in the wake of destructive Muslim invasions.

Though the learned author, Mr. Kale, prefers to call both the

* Published by S. D. Kale and M. D. Kale. Price Rs. 2.50. Obtainable from M. D. Kale, Advocate, Chhattarpur, Madhya Pradesh, India

buildings referred to in the inscription as temples, we prefer to interpret

"विष्णोः प्रासादः"

as the king's palace because (Vishnu does signify a king, and) had the inscription meant to be a Vishnu temple it need not have again mentioned the fact, as it does, that the building sheltered an image of Lord Vishnu.

The inscription assumes importance inasmuch as it refers to the raising in Agra of two buildings of crystal-white marble 838 years ago from today. (i. e. A. D. 1993)

Incidentally, this inscription effectively refutes the bland and blind assertion that it was only the Muslims who first started raising marble buildings in India. We have already proved in our two books that the Muslim rulers in India did not raise even a single mansion, canal, fort, palace, tomb or mosque whether of redstone or marble. They only appropriated earlier Hindu buildings and misused them.

In our view the two buildings referred to in the Bateshwar inscription still exist in Agra in all their marble splendour. They are the so-called Itimad-ud-Daulah tomb and the Taj Mahal.

What the inscription refers to as the king's palace is the present Itimad-ud-Daulah tomb. The Chandramauleeshwar temple is the Taj Mahal.

A common failing of scholars of Indian history has been their naivete in believing that there could be Muslim tombs and mosques galore in India without corresponding palaces. For instance, what is proudly pointed out as the Itimad-ud-Daulah tomb can have no meaning unless historians are also able to point out palaces where the august courtier Itimad-ud-Daulah lived while alive. Our explanation is that Itimad-ud-Daulah used to live in the very building in which he is believed to have been buried. And that building was an appropriated Hindu building. It is obviously the king's palace referred to in the Bateshwar inscription.

The Shiva (Chandramauleeshwar) temple is obviously the Taj Mahal for the following reasons :

1. It is of crystal-white marble as mentioned in the inscription.

2. Its pinnacle and entrance arches bear the trident *(trishul)* which is an exclusive emblem of Chandramauleeshwar.

3. The edifice is said to have been of such captivating beauty that the lord (Shiva) Chandramauleeshwar never again thought of returning to his Himalayan abode of Kailas.

Trident *(trishul)* at the pinnacle of the Taj Mahal

4. We have mentioned elsewhere in this book that the Taj Mahal garden included plants and trees all sacred to the Hindus. Among them is the Bel and Harshringar, the leaves and flowers of which are considered a necessity for the worship of Lord Shiva.

5. The central chamber of the Taj Mahal which is now believed to contain the cenotaphs of emperor Shahjahan and his wife Arjumand Banu Begum has around it ten quadrangular chambers providing a perambulatory passage for devotees as is the Hindu custom.

6. As the devotee passes through each of those rooms, ventilators provide him a view of the centre of the octagonal central chamber where the emblem of Lord Chandra- mauleeshwar was consecrated.

7. The high dome of the Taj Mahal central chamber with its reverberative effect provided the proper gimmick to produce the ecstatic din that accompanies the worship of Lord Shiva when He is supposed to perform the cosmic *(Tandava Nritya)* dance amidst the blowing of conches, beating of drums and tolling of bells.

8. The high dome is also a common feature of Shiva temples to enable the hanging of a pitcher for water to drip over the emblem of Lord Shiva. The chain which held the pitcher still remains suspended

from the centre of the dome.

9. Silver doors and gold railings mentioned as fixtures of the Taj Mahal are a common feature of Hindu temples surviving even to our own day. Had the gold railing, fancied to have been provided for Mumtaz's tomb, been subsequently removed one should have seen holes in the mosaic flooring for the props which supported the railing. There are no such holes. That means that it was Shahjahan who removed the gold railing of the ancient Hindu Shiva temple and carried it away to the treasury, before using the location of the Hindu idol to graft an Islamic cenotaph. Visitors may also notice there an ancient Hindu colour-sketch of eight directional pointers, 16 cobras, 32 tridents and 64 lotus buds all Hindu motifs in multiples of eight. That design is sketched in the concave domed ceiling of the octagonal central chamber, which anyone standing close to Mumtaz's cenotaph may look-up and see.

10. Guides at the Taj Mahal still mention a tradition of a drop of rain water dropping from the high dome top on the cenotaph within. This obviously is a remnant of the past memories of the water dripping on the emblem of Lord Shiva from the pitcher.

11. Tavernier mentions the six courts in the Taj Mahal building complex where a bazar used to be held. It is common knowledge that in Hindu tradition bazars and fairs are invariably held around temples which constitute the focal points of Hindu life.

12. The trident (trishul) which is Lord Shiva's exclusive weapon is also inlaid at the apex of the Taj Mahal's marble entrance arches on all four sides. It is in red and white lines exactly as some Hindus wear in colour on their foreheads. Its being installed there at the apex of the entrance arches clearly proves that it is an unmistakable Shiva temple.

13. A full-length design of the entire trident pinnacle as it towers above the dome, has been inlaid in the redstone yard to the right of the Taj Mahal as we stand facing the marble edifice. This again proves its Hindu origin since it has been a tradition in Hindu architecture to inscribe the basic scale used in the construction of every building, somewhere in the premises. In the case of the Taj Mahal the length of its trident pinnacle may be the basic scale used in raising the Shiva temple.

It is pointed out by some that the gilded pinnacle on the Taj Mahal dome bears the Arabic engraving ''Allaho Akbar'' meaning ''God is Great.'' That those words were stencilled on the sacred pinnacle after Shahjahan commandeered the Hindu temple for Islamic use is apparent from the fact that the replica of the pinnacle inlaid in the red-stone courtyard to the east does not bear that inscription.

At the back of the marble platform under the redstone terrace facing the river is a long row of spacious decorated chambers and an adjoining long corridor running along the entire length of that apartment row. Those chambers at a level lower than the basement central chamber, which is believed to contain the real graves, would not have been decorated had the Taj Mahal been an Islamic tomb. All visitors are apparently being misled. The corpse of Mumtaz, if at all buried in the Taj Mahal, must neither be in the ground floor octagonal chamber nor in the basement chamber.

The chambers right under the two cenotaphs on two floors which have been haphazardly sealed with brick and lime are likely to contain Hindu idols and inscriptions. Similarly the corridors which may be running along the east and west of the marble plinth under the redstone terrace also seem to have been sealed. Likewise the large door-size and ventilator-type openings in the apartment row, under the redstone terrace facing the river, have also been crudely walled up. If those ugly fillings are removed, the beauty of the underground apartments of the Taj Mahal, open to the cool breeze from the Yamuna river and to sunshine, decorated with coloured linear drawings, can once again be the delight of the visitor as it used to be in the days before Shahjahan's filibuster. Thus it is possible that right up to the river-bed level the Taj Mahal has two stories below the marble plinth besides a subterranean basement storey.

14. The ''Taj Mahal'' itself is far from Persian. It is a corrupt form of the Sanskrit term ''Tejo Maha Alaya'' meaning ''Resplendent Shrine.'' It was known as the resplendent shrine because it reflects a dazzling sheen in sunlight and moonlight. That name also attaches to it because Lord Shiva's third eye is said to emit a jet of lustre i.e. ''teja''. The traditional conjecture that the term Taj Mahal derives from the name of Mumtaz Mahal proves baseless on closer scrutiny-

In the first place, in Shahjahan's official chronicle, the name of the lady supposed to be buried inside is spelled Mumtazul Zamani and not Mumtaz Mahal. Secondly, the important, distinguishing prefix "Mum" could never be dropped off leaving the stump of "Taj Mahal" to designate the building. Thirdly, even if one attempts to squeeze some meaning from the term "Taj Mahal" it would connote "a crown residence," and not a tomb. Fourthly, there is no equivalent term in the entire range of Muslim lore or history. Had the term "Taj Mahal" been common, it should have been heard of in connection with Muslim tombs or palaces in other parts of the world. Fifthly the term Tejomahalaya applies to a shrine consecrating the 'Tej' variety of the Shiv emblem.

15. The Bateshwar inscription enables us, at least tentatively, to trace the 838-year history of the Taj Mahal to our own day. It appears that the Taj Mahal alias Tejo Maha Alaya originated as a Shiva temple in 1155 A. D. The deity, Lord Shiva, was consecrated in it on Sunday, the fifth day of the bright lunar fortnight of the Hindu month of Ashwin of that year. Sometime after 1206 when the iconoclastic alien Muslim sultanate was founded in Delhi, the temple was captured, its idol was uprooted or buried and the building was misused as a palace. We come to this conclusion from the first Mogul Emperor Babur's allusion to it in his *Memoirs* 371 years later (1526), as a palace captured from his predecessor Ibrahim Lodi. After Babur's son Humayun suffered reverse after reverse, around 1538 the Taj Mahal alias Tejo Maha Alaya was reconquered by the Hindus. We come to this conclusion because on November 5, 1556, Humayun's son Akbar had to reconquer the Delhi-Agra-Fatehpur Sikri region by defeating the Hindu warrior Hemu at the battle of Panipat. Apparently Akbar did not dispossess the Jaipur royal family of the Taj Mahal because the Jaipur family was his strongest Hindu ally and its scions, Bhagwandas and Mansingh, were his most trusted generals. They were also in-laws of the Mogul rulers. That after Humayun's defeat the Taj Mahal passed into the hands of the Jaipur royal family is apparent from Emperor Shahjahan's chronicle which admits having commandeered the Taj Mahal from Jaisingh, the then head of the Jaipur royal family. Thus we have a continuous and consistent account of the Taj Mahal from 1155 to the present day. During these 838 years

of its existence, we may say that the Taj Mahal originated as a Shiva temple and continued to be so for about one hundred years. For nearly 300 years thereafter it was misused as a palace or reconverted into a temple. From 1631 onwards the "Resplendent Shrine" (Tejo Maha Alaya) stands converted into an Islamic graveyard.

16. Besides the trident pinnacle, there are other Hindu symbols in the Taj namely the conch, the lotus and the sacred Hindu chant "OM" in Devanagari character.

Visitors to the Taj may notice the letter "om" woven in bold relief in embossed flower-designs on the interior marble walls. As one stands poised at the top of the stairs leading to the basement (to see what they call the 'real graves') one may see on the walls around the upper marble cenotaph chamber, at chest level, the esoteric sacred Hindu letter "om" woven into the embossed marble flower-patterns.

Pink lotus patterns on the border of the grilled panels that enclose the cenotaphs may also be noticed.

From the "om" and the trident and rows of rooms hidden along the four sides under the marble plinth, researchers may consider whether the Taj Mahal was the epicentre of some great Shaivite Hindu Tantric cult before Muslim occupation. The Jat community which predominates the Agra region is known traditionally to build Teja temples and worship the lustrous Lord Shiva.

As one descends the steps to the basement chamber to see the so-called real (?) cenotaphs at the first landing after seven steps one comes across on both sides arched recesses. One may notice that the arch on the left and the one on the right have been sealed with irregular marble slabs. That is to say, the size of marble pieces used to seal the left arched wall is different from those blocking the one at the right. This indicates that the stairs on either side leading to the rooms under the marble plinth, around what are now believed to be the real graves, were filled up and sealed at Shahjahan's order when the Taj temple was seized to be converted into an Islamic graveyard like the building-complexes at Fatehpur Sikri and the mansions which are now misleadingly known as the tombs of Akbar, Humayun, Safdarjang and many

others.

Students and scholars of architecture should, therefore, look upon and study the Tejo Maha Alaya, alias Taj Mahal, as a ''flower'' of ancient Hindu temple art and not of Muslim sepulchral workmanship. The latter does not exist, at least anywhere in India. All the medieval, so-called, Muslim tombs and mosques are ancient Hindu temples and palaces. The Taj Mahal is a classic instance of how the whole world has been duped and deluded for over three centuries into believing that the Taj Mahal was built as a tomb. That the Kali (Bhavani) temple inside the ancient Amer (modern Jaipur) fort-capital bears a close resemblance to the Tejo Maha Alaya in Agra in its white marble and embossed decorative work, is further proof that before being converted into a palace and later into a tomb the Taj Mahal (Tejo Maha Alaya) was a Hindu temple. It is now 362 years since the original Taj Mahal Shiva temple has been forced to play the role of a Muslim queen's mausoleum. Yet another turn in its fortune may once again restore the Taj Mahal to its original status of a Shiva temple at the hands of a resurgent India, who knows!

That the Taj Mahal must be the focal temple - the Tejo Maha Alaya - of an ancient Hindu township, finds corroboration in Keene's observation on page 179 of his *Handbook*. He says, ''The Taj Ganj (has a spot) known as Kalandar Darwaza, supposed to be that of a gateway in the wall which enclosed the ancient city of Agra centuries before Akbar's time.'' This fully corroborates our finding that the area around the Taj Mahal forms part of a very ancient portion of Agra city. This part of Agra had its own Shiva temple called the Tejo Maha Alaya. It was enclosed by the city wall as all temples used to be in ancient and medieval India. In fact the Kalandar Darwaza may be a corrupt Muslim term for some ancient Sanskrit name either for some other gateway or to what is now called the Tajganj gateway leading to the Taj Mahal premises. In fact in our view the proper frontal approach from ancient times was from the Tajganj gate. It still has its massive wooden gate intact.

Like the Taj Mahal, thousands of erstwhile Hindu buildings of ancient and medieval India have been under Muslim occupation

and made to bear false, implanted inscriptions as tombs, mosques and forts built by Muslims. This is unwittingly betrayed in a singularly observant remark of an American visitor named Bayard Taylor. He has been quoted on page 177 of *Keene's Handbook*. Taylor observes, ''I have been struck by the singular fact that while at the central seats of the Moslem empire art reached but a comparative degree of development here and there, on the opposite and most distant frontiers (i.e. in Spain and in India) it attained a rapid and splendid culmination.''

What Mr. Taylor means is that in lands so distant as Spain and India Muslim invaders apparently built stupendous and magnificent monuments but in their own lands like Syria, Iraq and Arabia they have pretty little to show of the same calibre.

We pity the naivete of Mr. Taylor and those of his kind. They have been badly duped. What they have been made to believe as Muslim buildings in distant Spain and India are not Muslim constructions at all. Those are all usurped indigenous buildings built by local chieftains in pre-Muslim times. They were only appropriated by Muslim conquerors and falsely represented as their own through superficial camouflage and concocted chronicles. This finding of ours should help Spain repudiate Muslim claims to its ancient buildings. Mr. M. H. Mills has also scientifically verified that the so called Cardoba mosque is a pre-Islamic edifice in Spain.

As a point of information we would like to add that the Taj Mahal is a little taller than the so-called Kutub Minar in Delhi. On page 174 of his book, Keene notes that the distance between the garden level and the point of the spike (the trident) on the main dome is 243.5 ft. while the so-called Kutub Minar in Delhi is 238 ft. and one inch in height. But since visitors cannot reach the topmost point of the trident pinnacle of the Taj but have to be much below it they do not realize the total height of the whole edifice including its pinnacle.

''The names of some early restorers are inscribed on the spike of the main dome,'' including those of Englishmen, adds Keene.

So even the inscriptions on the spike contain no claim on Shahjahan's behalf.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FAMOUS PEACOCK THRONE WAS HINDU

WE HAVE observed in an earlier chapter how the Taj Hindu palace had richly embellished central ground floor and basement chambers. The ground floor chamber had silver doors, gold railing and an enclosure surrounded by gem-studded marble screens. Given such an enclosure what could it contain? It must contain something equally arresting in its richness. A gilded frame would never hold an insignificant picture. Similarly, the scintillating central ground floor chamber with fixtures of precious metals and precious stones formed the rich setting that the fabulous Hindu Peacock Throne so well deserved. We come to this conclusion because both the Taj Mahal and the Peacock Throne enter the fictitious records of Shahjahan's reign almost simultaneously.

A Peacock Throne could never have been ordered by fanatic mediaeval Muslim rulers surrounded by even more fanatic maulvis. Throughout their millenium-long rule in India their one penchant was to break images, not to make them.

In fact, Shahjahan's motive in taking over the Hindu Taj palace was not only to break the back of a powerful and wealthy noble household by making it homeless, but also to enrich himself by the fabulous wealth that palace contained. In taking over the Taj Mahal, therefore, Shahjahan stripped it of its silver doors, gold railing, curtains of pearl, gold pitcher, gems from the delicately carved marble screens (now left with gaping holes) and above all the famous, scintillating Peacock Throne.

The Peacock Throne could only be a piece of Hindu palace furniture because traditionally a Hindu throne must have the effigy of some bird or animal known for its splendour or valour. In Hindu terminology the very term for a throne is a "Lion Seat (*Sinhasan*)."

Hindu deities and royalty had their own pet animal or bird figure supporting their thrones. In Hindu mythology, the eagle, lion, tiger, peacock and a number of other birds and animals are associated with the different gods as being the motifs of their respective thrones. As against this, Muslim religious tradition strictly rules out any figure, drawing or image. Taking all this into consideration it should not be difficult for any serious student of history to realise that the myth of Shahjahan having ordered a Peacock Throne has been deftly woven into the fabric of Shahjahan's reign only because he had the Hindu Peacock Throne coldly removed to his palace soon after taking over the Taj Mahal from its owner, Jaisingh.

It also appears that the scintillating throne used to be covered by a costly canopy and also a net of pearls. In denuding the Taj palace of such fabulous wealth Shahjahan struck a virtual gem mine, leaving a cold stone edifice for the burial of his consort Mumtaz and other members of the harem.

That fabulous Peacock Throne, later spirited away to Persia by the Muslim invader, Nadir Shah, is no longer extant. It was dismembered and disbursed or looted piece by piece by Nadir Shah's feuding Muslim Iranian descendants precisely because even as a plundered heirloom the presence of an idolatrous, infidel throne was anathema to fanatic Muslim royalty.

A description of the Peacock Throne is given by Shahjahan's official chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori under the account of the eighth[87] year of Shahjahan's reign corresponding to 1636. It may be recalled here that Mumtaz had died around 1631 and according to the fictitious accounts of the Taj Mahal the construction of this fabulous dreamland monument had begun within a year of her death. This is said to have continued over a period of 10 to 22 years. It may also be remembered that soon after coming to the throne on[88] 4th February 1628 Shahjahan had to spend the first few years in murdering all his rivals. When Mumtaz died between 1630 and 1631 Shahjahan is also said to have distributed lot of wealth to the fakirs and needy as we understand from the *Badshahnama*

87. p. 45, Elliot & Dowson, *History*, Ibid, Vol. VII.
88. P. 6, Ibid.

passage quoted by us in an earlier chapter of this book. Later Shahjahan, we are told, embarked on building the Taj Mahal complex.

Hardly had the project begun, than we are told that by 1635 Shahjahan had amassed such a plethora of gems and bullion, within seven years of his accession that he did not know what to do with them. He therefore had a fabulous Peacock Throne ordered. Says Mulla Abdul Hamid[89] : "In the course of years many valuable gems had come into the imperial jewel house..." A little more than ordinary naivete is needed to believe in such skulduggery. Nobody seems to have bothered to compile, compare, verify and subject such accounts to close logical scrutiny. If we are to believe in such prodigality, the Moguls must have had bullion and gems dropping like rain over them all the time.

We may, therefore, ignore the abracadabra of Shahjan having ordered the throne and instead concentrate on its dimensions and the wealth that went into its making. Even conceding that the monetary value of the gems and bullion used in that throne may have been exaggerated by Mulla Abdul Hamid, yet his description should give one some idea of what the ancient Hindu Peacock Throne, usurped by Shahjahan, looked like.

According to Shahjahan's court chronicler[90], it appears that the Peacock Throne was "three yards long, two and a half yards broad, five yards high and set with jewels worth 86 lakh rupees. The canopy had 12 emerald columns. On top of each pillar were two peacocks thick-set with rubies, diamonds, emeralds and pearls. The throne cost ten million rupees" and is said to have been completed in seven years. That means that this was yet another equally fabulous and expensive project that Shahjahan undertook even while he was building the Taj Mahal. This is something more fantastic than an Arabian Nights story. The throne had 11 recesses, the middle one being for the ruler himself.

There is one possible way of finding which Hindu ruler had this throne made which ultimately found its way into Shahjahan's hand.

89. P. 45, Ibid.
90. PP. 45-46, Ibid.

In Hindu tradition the ruler was always supposed to have around him his wife and sons or brothers at the enthronement and other official occasions. Lord Rama is always shown seated with his queen Seeta and his three brothers around him. From this it seems that the Hindu ruler who ordered the Peacock Throne had nine sons. The 11 recesses in the Peacock Throne were meant for him, his wife and nine sons. If in the pre-Muslim history of India we can identify such a Hindu monarch known for his valour and large domain, he could very well be the monarch to have that throne made.

It could also be that Chandragupta Maurya's surname may have derived from his Peacock Throne since 'Mayura' means a peacock (in Sanskrit) and Maurya may be a derivative of Mayura. In that case the famous Peacock Throne usurped by Shahjahan could be traced back at least to Chandragupta Maurya.

Another possibility could be that a Hindu ruler who was both a literary genius and a warrior could have ordered the Peacock Throne, since in Hindu mythology the peacock is the mount of both the Goddess of Learing, Saraswati, and the warlord Kartikeya Swami. One such ruler in ancient India known for his valour, scholarship and devotion to truth, was Vikramaditya, the founder of the *Samvat* era in 57 B. C. It may be that the Peacock Throne which the Muslim emperor Shahjahan grabbed together with the Taj Mahal had been initially commissioned by King Vikramaditya, the conqueror of Arabia.

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CHAPTER XXVI

INCONSISTENCIES IN THE LEGEND

CONTRARY to the traditional belief in their nostalgic grandeur, the courts of mediaeval Muslim rulers were hotbeds of squalor, intrigue, vice, cruelty and torture. There was no scope for the promotion of art or other higher values of life in that atmosphere. All talk, therefore, about dance, painting, music and building art having been encouraged is baseless. In fact with the beginning of Muslim invasions, all progress ceased because most of the citizenry were worried about their own physical security and the safety of their wives and children. In such an atmosphere of intense terror nothing thrives. A building like the Taj Mahal presupposes a long period of peace and prosperity.

Mr. Keshab Chandra Majumdar says[91], "Itimad-ud-Daula, father of Nurjahan, tells us that as many as 5,000 women nestled in Mogul harems... the male issues of some of the women had to undergo solitary confinement for life." When such was the end of the ruler's own progeny, one can very well imagine the lot of the citizenry, a majority of whom belonged to a religion and culture highly detested by the alien ruler. Besides, we know how sodomy was rampant among the ruling Muslim families and the noblemen; how eunuchs formed an important adjunct of the Muslim courts. Does not such an atmosphere lead to desolation and a negation of all art ?

What with the incessant warfare they had to conduct, the retinues of servants they kept, a nobility thirsting for wealth, and the harems, the Muslim rulers in India were always hard pressed for money. To put it in the layman's terms, they could hardly make both ends meet. All descriptions, therefore of the immense

91. P. 5, *Imperial Agra of the Moghuls* by K. C. Majumdar

wealth of the court are incorrect. Wealth no doubt there used to be, constantly replenished by plundering the citizenry, but it used to get drained away no sooner than it was brought in. Thus court wealth ebbed and swelled. In fact pressing wants necessitated raids on the ruler's poor and defenceless subjects as a manoeuvre of statecraft. Almost as soon as the wealth came in, it had to be disbursed. The fancied treasure-reserves for fanciful projects like a Taj Mahal to bury a deceased queen in were just not there. Contrary accounts written by mediaeval Muslim chroniclers were motivated by the need to flatter the ruler and ensure a steady share of the ruler's wealth for themselves. Basking in the sunshine of royal favour, the so-called chroniclers wangled for themselves a cushy job of praising the ruler sky high and sharing in his spoils.

A typical instance of how the history of Indian monuments and their architecture has been based on wild conjectures is found in *Keene's Handbook*[22] "Alimardan Khan (the governor of Kandahar) probably introduced the bulbous dome, which some regard as a marked feature in the decadence of Saracenic architecture in India : a striking example being found in the dome of the Taj Mahal." This shows how traditional theories are conjectural bubbles inflated with endless "probables." On page 209, Keene says : "The Chausath Khamba is believed to be a tomb of Bakshi Salabat Khan" (Shahjahan's chief treasurer). The words *Chausath Khamba* are a non-Muslim term. Ought not students of history to ask themselves as to who footed the bills of these expensive mausoleums for all the Fakir Mohammads and Lakeer Ahmads of Mogul times, including eunuchs, *faujdars*, prostitutes, faquirs, sons, grandsons and great grandsons? Is such a thing possible within the ambit of human nature as it is constituted? Is it possible that those who built no palaces for themselves or their children built palatial tombs for hated dead predecessors?

Keene tells the reader on page 150 of his *Handbook* that "....two baradaries and other accessories of a pleasure resort were provided here after the burial of Mumtaz...." It is absurd to imagine that a monarch bereaving the death of his wife would provide pavilions

22. P. 38, footnote, *Keene's Handbook*, ibid.

at state expense for people to visit and revel in especially during Shahjahan's despotic era when the subjects counted for nothing. But the presence of the pleasure pavilions is yet another convincing proof that the *baradaries* (corridors) are there because the Taj originated as a Rajput temple palace.

How the whole story of the building of the Taj Mahal is bluff and bluster is apparent from yet another weak link in the traditional account. On page 165 of his *Handbook*, Keene states, "It is highly probable that the remains of Mumtaz (brought from Burhanpur where they had lain for six months) lay in the temporary tomb near the Masjid Baoli for about nine years... When they were finally removed to this tomb (in the basement of the so-called Taj Mahal) is not authoritatively known." Since such an important detail as the removal of Mumtaz's body to its final resting place is missing, after all the pother about Shahjahan having built a monument specially for her burial, the question arises whether the Taj does in fact contain the remains of Mumtaz and Shahjahan or whether the cenotaphs were just meant to be mere scarecrows to usurp an ancient Rajput palace ?

Another instance of the pathetic loopholes that riddle every single detail of the Shahjahan legend of the Taj concerns the marble screens around the cenotaphs. About these *Keene's Handbook* says on page 171. "The marble screen enclosing an octagonal area in the centre of the cenotaph chamber was, according to the *Badshahnama*, placed here in 1642 by Shahjahan.... According, however, to competent authority the screen was placed here by Aurangzeb after he laid his father's remains there."

This passage invites close examination. It should be noted that Keene does not consider the *Badshahnama*, the chronicle written at Shahjahan's own bidding, to be worthy of any credence, since he calls the other authorities more competent. In so far as Keene disbelieves the *Badshahnama*, he is right because, as has been repeatedly emphasized by us and several other discerning students of history, mediaeval Muslim chronicles were written for flattery, motivated by the desire to bask in the monarch's favour. But Keene is wrong in holding that the "other authorities" he refers to as "competent" were more trustworthy. Sycophants, whether of

Shahjahan's or Aurangzeb's court, were birds of the same feather. The only plausible conclusion we can draw then is that the marble screen was all along there enclosing the sacred Shivling or the precious Peacock Throne of the Rajput owners of the Taj palace. Aurangzeb was hardly the man who would spend any money on decorating his hated father's cenotaph.

Sleeman[illegible] says that a Koranic text quoted on the queen's tomb terminates with the words, "and defend us from the tribe of unbelievers..." This ending is significant since our whole point has been to prove that the Taj Mahal was commandeered from an "unbelieving" family precisely to end that "tribe." The choice of the passage for quoting on Mumtaz's tomb betrays the purpose.

How a steady barrage of propaganda kept up through centuries has resulted in misleading and befooling generations of laymen, scholars of history and architects into the belief that the massive and magnificent mediaeval monuments are Muslim, though in fact they belong to an earlier period, may be illustrated from Sleeman's experience. In Chapter IV on page 29 of his book, in describing, his visits to monuments in Agra, the author says, "I crossed over the river Jamuna one morning to look at the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula... On my way back I asked one of the boatmen, who was rowing me, who had built what appeared to me a new dome within the fort?

'One of the emperors of course,' said he.

'What makes you think so?'

'Because such things are made only by emperors,' replied the man quietly.

'True, very true,' said an old Musalman trooper who had dismounted to follow me, with a melancholy shake of the head. 'Very true : who but emperors could do such things as these?'

Encouraged by the trooper the boatmen continued. 'The Jats and Marathas did nothing but pull down and destroy while they held their accursed dominion here...' "

In the above passage we have a clue to the manner in which

[illegible] P. Rambles and Recollections of An Indian Offical, Ibid.

Western scholars and visitors have been misguided by the prattle of interested people. How palpably absurd the accusation against the Marathas and Jats is can be seen from the unscathed existence of the Taj and the so-called Itimad-ud-Daulah tomb. Not that they are original Muslim buildings but ever since they were put to use as Muslim tombs the Jats and Marathas did not so much as even scratch them. But somehow propaganda has succeeded in its objective of making people wrongly believe in the Muslim origin of mediaeval monuments.

We ourselves had a similar experience as Sleeman.

Once while on a visit to Agra Fort we asked a bearded Muslim, hurrying for his ablutions with a potful of water, as to which part of the fort Shivaji had been incarcerated in by Aurangzeb. In aksing that question we only wanted to test the popular version, because within our own mind we were clear that Shivaji had been confined in Ram Singh's home outside the fort. But the Muslim even without batting an eyelid or fumbling for an answer, pointed to a distant spot beyond a partition wall, well within the area occupied by the army, and therefore unapproachable by visitors. We then realized from our own experience how the lay public and serious students of history alike have been consistently misled by unscrupulous people through blatant statements not only spoken but officially recorded in mediaeval volumes believed to be an authentic record of contemporary events.

All that has been said in the foregoing pages should be enough to convince even the most credulous that the Taj legend is a hoax played on a gullible world. Every aspect of it is riddled with contradictions. The falsity of the traditional version about the building of the Taj Mahal by Shahjahan stands thoroughly exposed. We must, therefore, try to reconstruct a true account of how the Taj Mahal originated.

A number of clues discussed above have shown us that the Taj Mahal originated as a temple and not as a tomb : its grandeur, octagonal design, tridents, Om, conch shell and cobra decor on its top border, pleasure pavilions, the marble screens, the rich mosaic flooring, rich fixtures like silver doors and gold railing, hundreds of rooms, names like Khawaspura and Jaisinghpura, lush

garden full of the choicest fruit and flower plants holy to the Rajputs, and the like.

Referring to the falsity of mediaeval Muslim chronicles Keene observes[34] : "Indian historians, in attempting to belaud the acts of their kingly patrons, have often committed themselves to statements which under the searchlight of subsequent scrutiny are found to be absolutely inaccurate." Keene is mistaken in calling them Indian. They were alien Muslims.

In the subsequent pages he confirms that "the cenotaph of Shahjahan... is unsymmetrically placed (p. 172). There are 14 rooms in a line along the river face of the great basement (p. 177)." About these rooms Keene says : "The basement rooms are centrally situated as a line of 14 rooms along the face of the Great Basement, under its terrace; and each of them is connected by a doorway with an inner lobby running East and West along their entire length. From each end of the lobby a staircase ascends to the terrace of the Great Basement, where *its entrance closed by red sandstone slabs, lay unsuspected until discovered a few years ago, the clue being given by a small window overlooking the river in each of the two easternmost rooms*. The rooms, once frescoed and otherwise decorated being now in darkness and infested by bats, cannot be explored without a torch or lamp. Whether they originally opened on to a ghat and gave admittance to the Taj from the river; or being provided with windows, were used as cool resorts during the heat of the day, cannot now be decided." (Actually the rooms number 22, not 14).

The above is a very important clue to how much is hidden from the public in the Taj Mahal. The lay visitor peeping into the cenotaph chamber comes away satisfied, calling it a day, thinking that he has seen the mighty sepulchral handiwork of a doughty Shahjahan. But he is being badly cheated and duped. As Keene has rightly pointed out, scores of basement chambers lie sealed with redstone slabs. Shahjahan having had no need for them after converting the fabulous Hindu mansion into a Muslim tomb got them sealed. Thus, far from building anything, Shahjahan got a

34. P. 171, *Keene's Handbook*, ibid, the rooms are actually 22.

large part of the Taj Mahal sealed or blocked. This has happened with all mediaeval tombs in India, whether they masquerade today as Humayun's, Itimaduddaula's, Safdarjang's, Akbar's or anybody else's tomb.

The visitor standing at the back of the Taj Mahal on the spacious redstone terrace looking at the Yamuna river flowing underneath may well imagine that if there are 22 rooms in a row along the river-front alone, how many more should there be in the entire basement from the back to the front of the great marble plinth?

The visitor may also well imagine that if there are scores of rooms in the basement of the redstone terrace how may such basements could there be right upto the ground level where Yamuna flows? From the ground level to the marble platform there are two storeys with each storey consisting of scores of rooms. The visitor is not shown any of these. All those rooms were closed to visitors eversince Shahjahan appropriated that Hindu mansion to be used as a Muslim tomb. Unfortunately, even today when we are free, the free citizen of a free India is still being deprived of his right of free access to all apartments of the great Taj Mahal. Instead, he is being doped and duped with fairy tales of a fancied Shahjahan-Mumtaz romance.

That this ban to the basement chambers has been imposed eversince Shahjahan took over the Hindu mansion in circa 1631, is clear from Bernier's notings. Bernier was a French visitor to India during Shahjahan's reign.

Apart from the basement under the redstone terrace there must be another huge basement containing many rooms even under the marble platform. The visitor who descends from the cenotaph chamber to the basement graves is made to believe that there is only one dark chamber there enclosing the two graves. But that is far from the truth. The darkness there is symbolic of the darkness hiding many vital details from the visitor about the surrounding rooms.

Many people being in a hurry come away with the notion that the marble building consists of only one cenotaph chamber on the ground floor and one sepulchral chamber in the basement. There are many spacious halls and rooms surrounding them. Keene notes

on page 174 of his handbook : "In the remainder of the interior of the tomb round the cenotaph chamber are four square halls, one behind each apse, and four octagonal halls, one behind each set of three small corner apses. These halls are connected by passages with each other, with the apses and with the cenotaph chamber making it easy to walk through them from the square hall giving admission to the mortuary chamber and back to it. From each octagonal hall on the south, a staircase ascends to the upper storey, the halls and passages of which are similar to those below..."

Since the ground floor of the marble building has many halls and octagonal rooms, it is clear that they must have their counterparts in the basement underneath. If the visitor sees no access to them from the central sepulchral chamber in the basement it is clear that those entrances too have been sealed. Thus there is much to investigate, unseal and discover in the basement storeys of the Taj Mahal right from the marble plinth to the Yamuna level. If all those chambers in the many basement stories are brought to light it will facilitate the piecing together of the story of Shahjahan's usurpation of a Hindu mansion.

We would also like to draw reader attention to Keene's remarks that the basement rooms bore frescoes and other decoration. They have all been scrubbed off. This is yet another indication of the Taj being an erstwhile Hindu mansion. Shahjahan would not build scores of ornate rooms in the basement and have them sealed! According to the *Badshahnama* there were four serais each with 136 rooms in Mumtazabad (which obviously was the name foisted on the former Jaisinghpura and Khawaspura), and a central chowk (square) from which roads branched off at right angles. This is further testimony that the ancient Rajput temple palace which is now known as the Taj Mahal was surrounded by other huge buildings connected with a network of roads. That is exactly what the term "pura" signifies in Sanskrit. Such a huge building complex can only be justified if a temple palace is its nucleus. a tomb does not need such annexes nor can anyone afford them.

After having quoted the evidence from books and articles dealing with the Taj, discrediting the traditional Taj legend, and establishing that it originated as a temple palace and not as a tomb, we shall

now concern ourselves with a survey of the building itself.

Since Vincent Smith mentions on page 9 of his book titled *Akbar the Great Mogul* that Babur died in his garden palace at Agra, it is clear that all of Babur's predecessors and successors who ruled over Agra must have spent at least a few days or hours in the Taj palace as absolute owners or as guests of Rajput noblemen like Raja Mansingh and Jaisingh on whom ownership of the Taj ultimately devolved. According to the Persian poet Salman, Agra fort was captured by Mohammad Ghaznavi, after a desperate assault, from Jaipal. Whosoever ruled the fort, owned the Taj palace. Thus we come to the conclusion that Jaipal had owned the Taj, and lived in it. After him Mohammend Ghazni should have stayed in the Taj at least occasionally though for security reasons he must have preferred the massive confines of the fort. The others who seem to have been in occupation of the nearly 25-room marble suite of the Taj palace are : Rajput rulers of the Tuar clan who came to power after Mohammad Ghaznavi's invasion, Vishaldev Chauhan, Bahlol Lodi, Sikandar Lodi, Babur, Humayun, Sher Shah, Jalal Khan, Humayun again, Akbar, Mansingh, Jagatsingh and Jaisingh. It was from the last owner, as all versions invariably admit, that the Taj property was taken by Shahjahan to be converted into a tomb.

As the Taj had been a royal residence for generations, occupied by those who controlled Agra, it is clear that it must have been the scene of many royal births and deaths as is evidenced by the reference to Babur's death in it.

In the Agra Fort gallery, facing the Taj, is a tiny glass piece embedded in the wall to mirror the Taj Mahal. Originators of the Taj legend have conveniently annexed the device to add to the mesmeric effect of the myth. Embedding tiny, round glass reflectors by their thousands in arched recesses of palaces and in women's dresses is a very common and widespread Rajput practice. Such glass reflectors can still be seen fixed in numerous ancient palaces in Rajasthan, and continue to be used for decoration in Rajput women's dresses. Saracenic architecture, if there be any such, should rather believe in "purdah," i.e. shrouding or hiding and would never think of glass reflectors. Mirror-pieces decorated the royal

apartments in Agra fort because it was a Hindu fort. Moreover Shahjahan was never permitted access during internment to that part of the fort which overlooks the Taj. It is, therefore, absurd to argue that during detention he consoled himself by catching glimpses of the Taj in the tiny glass piece. A further absurdity and inconsistency is . would an old monarch, bent with age, stand up all the time to strain his bedimmed vision, and peer into a tiny glass piece with his back to the Taj to catch a fleeting, reflected glimpse of the Taj when he could as well have a clear, full, straight and direct view of it seated comfortably facing the monument? And would not such a stance give him a pain in the neck? This is yet another instance of how students of history, archaeologists and lay visitors have never bothered or cared to take stock of the loose bits of the Taj legend, and tried to rearrange them to find out whether they add up to at least a coherent and cogent account, even if fictitious.

A government peon, Aneesh Ahmad, informed us that the tiny mirror was fixed there by his father Insha Alla Khan, about 50 years ago to illustrate how mirror-pieces decorated those walls under the Hindu rulers. Therefore the legend that Shahjahan used to see the reflection of the Taj in that mirror is of course a crude, cruel hoax.

Since readers may get a better idea of the results achieved by the time, labour and money spent on mediaeval memorial monuments by comparing them with similar recent projects. Let us compare Mahatma Gandhi's *samadhi* with the Taj Mahal if the latter is to be believed an original tomb.

Mahatma Gandhi's *samadhi* too had been nearly 17 years under construction. It has a garden around it. And crores of rupees have been spent in constructing it. Roughly, therefore, the time, labour and money spent on Mahatma Gandhi's *Samadhi* tally with the most exaggerated version of the time, labour and money spent on the Taj. And yet the results are vastly different. Mahatma Gandhi's *Samadhi* stands no comparison with the height, grandeur, massiveness, covered area, embellishments and the beauty of the Taj Mahal. This is so in spite of Mahatma Gandhi having commanded almost universal respect and love from a vastly larger population

and a wider region. In addition to its sculptural splendour, the Taj is also believed to have had gem-studded marble screens, gold railing and silver doors. Readers can well add up the cost of all these. It will amount to a fabulous, astronomical sum. Perhaps even all the Mogul emperors together could not have invested that much on a single monument. Besides, who would lavish so much wealth on a monument which would be the haunt of faquirs and menials? Moreover, such lavishness ill suits a sepulchre. It is only temples or palaces which can and do have such magnificence.

Both, the entrance from the redstone quadrangle into the Taj grounds as well as the entrance to the cenotaph chamber face south. Had the Taj been an original sepulchre, its entrance should have faced the west, because Islam allows communion with Allah for both the living and the dead, only from the direction of the Kaba. This is a very important clue to refute the traditional claim that the Taj Mahal originated as a tomb.

Mediaeval Muslim monuments are almost always mosques and tombs, except in a few cases. At the outset it appears strange that a long line of these extrovert monarchs built tombs and mosques galore but seldom palaces. It is stranger still that the successor who built a palatial tomb for his predecessor, according to current tradition, also thirsted for the predecessor's blood while the latter ruled. For argument's sake, if we assume both those propositions to be true, then that practice of building tombs ought to have some uniformity and sense of proportion. From this point of view let us compare the so-called tombs of Humayun, Akbar and Mumtaz. Humayun had hardly re-established himself in India when, within six months, he died. He could hardly boast of a large empire and yet his so-called tomb in Delhi is a huge palatial building surrounded by three defensive walls. Akbar, the mightiest of the Moguls, has a comparatively modest, and simple tomb in Sikandra. Mumtaz, the second wife of Shahjahan, and one among thousands of his consorts, has the grandest mausoleum. In grandeur and magnificence, the Taj Mahal, Humayun's tomb and Akbar's mausoleum would rank first, second and third respectively.

The reader may now reflect whether that is the ranking in history of the persons whose tombs those buildings are supposed

to be. That all those buildings are palaces and are entirely in the Hindu style, has also to be remembered. From this it becomes clear that it was a question of using whichever Rajput palace or temple that came handy for the burial, and not one of building a new mausoleum. That is why the tombs do not represent any uniformity or sense of proportion to the importance of the individuals they are supposed to commemorate. The turmoil and the deadly internecine struggle that followed the death of every Muslim ruler also ruled out the possibility of any special mausoleum being built. Nobody had any exclusive control of the treasury, and even if he had, why would he bother to spend it on an infructuous, sentimental project of commemorating a dead predecessor, than on winning the war of succession? And who would supervise the building construction, and how would he do it?

It may be noted that the so-called Humayun Tomb in New Delhi still forms part of what is called the "Jaipur Estate." It was, therefore, one of the temple palaces which the Hindu ruling family of Jaipur held in Delhi. The Taj Mahal also was a temple palace owned by the same family in Agra. Architecturally, both are similar, except that the grandeur, magnificence and delicacy of the Taj surpasses that of the Delhi monument.

The undisputed ownership of Jaisingh over the "Taj" before it was taken over by Shahjahan, is a very crucial detail. In fact, in the mass of evidence available before us, Jaisingh's title to the Taj property is the kingpin or the pivot on which the whole case turns from the traditional Shahjahan orientation to earlier Rajput origin.

Any court of law, where men of worldy wisdom preside and who do not allow their judgment to run away with nostalgic, enemy-oriented myths, would at once see the importance of the one unanimously conceded detail of Jaisingh's ownership of the Taj property. History scholars have blundered precisely at this point. Believing that Shahjahan built an original tomb they all along presumed that he acquired only an empty plot of land from Jaisingh. But we have already found from a very close scrutiny that the Taj legend is a fabrication from beginning to end. The inescapable conclusion, therefore, is that Shahjahan acquired a readymade temple

palace and misused it as a tomb.

Though we have observed that Jaisingh's ownership clinches the issue, yet there are several other proofs which reinforce our contention that the Taj Mahal originated as a Rajput temple palace. Inside the Taj Mahal the entire tapestry is made up of Indian floral designs.

Had the Taj been an original tomb, Shahjahan would never have allowed Indian flora to form the dominant feature of the tapestry design inside the mausoleum of his wife. It is idle to argue that because the workmen employed on the Taj happened to be Hindus their motifs got incorporated in the Taj design. It must be remembered that it is the person who pays the piper that calls the tune. Moreover, when it is a question of the peace of the departed soul, symbols and motifs of a detested religion would never have been allowed to be incorporated in the ornamental patterns of the Taj. In fact the whole idea of having such a luxurious tomb built and having decorative patterns made inside it is frowned upon in Islamic religion and tradtion. But Shahjahan had no alternative but to put up with them since he had taken over a ready-made "heathen" monument.

Those who argue that mediaeval Muslim rulers freely allowed adoption of the Hindu style and art in their monuments must consider that even in this 20th century, when the edge of orthodoxy has considerably blunted, no group of Muslims will ever dare or care to plan building a tomb or a mosque in the temple style.

Explaining away the presence of Hindu designs and motifs in decorative patterns in the Taj, on the basis of Hindu workmen employed, is futile on another ground also. Traditional Muslim records (which we have proved to be fictitious) have all along listed Muslim names as the sole designers and artisans of the Taj. Their having any love or penchant for Hindu motifs is out of the question. One must also remember that the destruction of Indian temples, works of art, writings, scriptures, culture and religion used to be one of the primary and dominant objectives of every Muslim ruler in India. How then could the same rulers ever tolerate, much less promote, the incorporation of Indian art, patterns and motifs in their monuments! All these considerations ought to convince readers that historians and architects alike have, from a superficial

presumption, believed mediaeval mosques and tombs to be original Muslim structures without feeling the necessity to go into the origin of those buildings.

What is worse is that in innumerable instances when these historians and architects became aware, to their utter discomfiture, that contrary to written claims the buildings existed even before the death of the persons whose tombs they were supposed to be, they explained them away by the speculation that the deceased had "dug" their own graves and raised their own mausoleums in advance. Thus Hoshang Shah's tomb in Mandu (Central India), Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, the Chini-ka-Rauza in Agra and of Ghiasuddin Tughlak in Delhi are said to be essays in auto-tomb-building by the respective monarchs who cared a hang for anybody or anything while alive and who went through their lives as though they alone would never die. It is the height of absurdity to believe that the deceased monarchs or courtiers built their own tombs. Nothing can be more ridiculous and puerile. The straight, true and cogent explanation is that captured, Rajput-built mansions of old were used for the burial of Muslim monarchs. Since it did not sound very decent and dignified that august monarchs who had lorded it over during their lifetime were not provided a fitting burial by their successors, the latter have left false accounts of having built the tombs, as Jahangir claims to have built Akbar's tomb. Historians and architects having realized that statements like those of Jahangir and others claiming to be the builders of their respective predecessors' tombs were false, substituted their own myth to explain away the discrepancy.It is time that such distortions and perversions, deliberate and facile, were removed from Indian historical texts.

Lotuses are interspersed in the decorative patterns in the Taj Mahal. Lotuses are not only very sacred to the Hindus but also an integral part of Hindu decorative art. Their presence reinforces the case of the Rajput origin of the Taj.

The wall enclosing Jaisinghpur alias Taj-ganj township also goes around the Taj Mahal without any break in its continuity. Had Shahjahan built the Taj Mahal as a tomb it would have had a separate wall around it, removed from the town for silence and seclusion. That the Taj Mahal is enclosed by the town wall reinforces our

finding that the Taj Mahal as a palace or temple is part of the town. The main entrance to the Taj Mahal (palace and temple) is also from the massive gateway of what is now called the Taj Ganj. In Varanasi too the famous Lord Shiva shrine known as Kashi Vishwanath forms part of the town and is approached from inside the town.

The existence of a ghat and landing place for boats, near the Taj also points to the inevitable conclusion that the Taj was a temple palace. The 22 underground chambers while being redundant in a tomb are necessary in a temple palace. The same can be said about the Basai tower and the many annexes which have been referred to earlier.

While all accounts argee that before Shahjahan took it over, the Taj property was owned by Jaisingh, they differ hopelessly concerning the mode of acquisition. We have already seen that Shahjahan's own official chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid has recorded that the Taj palace was acquired in exchange for some landed estate elsewhere in Shahjahan's dominions. But B. P. Saksena records in his book[36] that the plot was "acquired for a nominal price." Significantly enough, Abdul Hamid fails to point out which plot where was given in exchange, as Saksena fails to say what the nominal price was.

Shahjahan had no scruples in ordering forged and false accounts to be written. This fact is known to historians. While a prince, Shahjahan had turned a rebel against his reigning father Jahangir. He had, therefore, been referred to in vile and abusive terms in the account of Jahangir's reign written at the latter's behest. Copies of that chronicle, officially blessed and circulated, were with all the courtiers when Shahjahan came to the throne. For such a damaging record to be in the possession of the nobility even after Shahjahan had begun to rule was intolerable to him. He, therefore, ordered a fake *Jahangirnama* to be written and got it issued as a substitute for the one written at his father Jahangir's behest. It is no wonder, therefore, if fanciful forgeries about the mythical building of the Taj Mahal were fabricated under Shahjahan's own royal instigation and encouragement.

It is often argued that since there are some monuments in West Asia similar to the mediaeval monuments in India, like the

so-called Kutub Minar and the Taj Mahal, it could only have been the Muslim rulers of India who got the latter constructed. It is conveniently forgotten by proponents of this view that Mahammad Ghazni, Tamerlain and other invaders have gone on record confessing that on gatecrashing into India they gaped in wide-eyed wonder at even Indian river ghats, not to talk of its grand temples and palaces. Compared to the mastery and skill achieved in India, West Asian building art was very primitive. Imposing monuments there were erected when[16] Indian Kshatriyas ruled West Asia. But with the weakening of their hold an era of revolt set in. Widespread chaos and destruction ushered in a millenium of unrest, in which the pursuit of art was tabooed and all education came to an end. Large groups headed by adventurous marauders not finding the wherewithal to live or pursue any peaceful occupation in their own homelands cast covetous eyes on lands like India abounding in wealth.

Tamerlain has recorded in his autobiography that while massacring the Hindus he used to spare stone masons and other building workmen and artists to be driven across the Punjab and other northern regions to West Asia to build tombs and mosques as grand as the monuments he found in India.

Since Tamerlain and all other invaders followed a set pattern, Tamerlain's observation is reminiscent of the practice of all mediaeval Muslim invaders of forcing hundreds and thousands of Indian craftsmen to go to West Asia, get converted to Islam, and settle down to build monuments in West Asian lands with tools, skill and wealth plundered from India.

Scholars and students of Indian history and architecture must realise that the theory of Indo-Saracenic architecture needs to be turned inside out. Instead of monuments in India being built to Saracenic order and design, monuments in Saracenic lands were built by Indian craftsmen, with Indian tools and wealth and to Indian design. That explains the similarity, if any, of Indian mediaeval monuments to those found in West Asian countries.

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15. *History of the Shahjahan of Delhi* by Prof. B. P. Saksena.

16. Dealt with in more detail in this author's *Some Blunders of Indian Historical Research* in a special chapter on the topic.

Having proved by the evidence cited that the so-called Taj Mahal is not an original tomb but a pre-Muslim temple palace, it would be pertinent to find out who built it and when? In this regard, perhaps the *Pothi Khana* (i.e. the archives) and Kapad Dwara i.e. top-secret documents of the Jaipur royal family, around 1631 A. D., and of the Sikarwal Rajputs, founders of what is known as Fatehpur Sikri, could be useful in throwing some light. Those having access to such records would, therefore, do well to browse through them. Such an effort is bound to be immensely rewarding even otherwise for refuting many myths of mediaeval history which is currently a confused and tangled mass of motivated Anglo-Muslim falsehoods.

Those who believe that the Taj Mahal derives its name from Mumtaz Mahal lying buried in it are mistaken. Firstly, she may not at all be buried in it. Secondly, her name was not Mumtaz Mahal but Mumtaz-ul-Zamani. Thirdly, in the Persian script the name of Mumtaz ends in ''z'' while that of the Taj in 'j'; hence the word Taj is not derived from Mumtaz. Fourthly the proper Muslim term would be Mahal-e-Taj, not Taj Mahal. Like a beautiful dowager robbed of all her wealth, the Taj Mahal stripped of all its embellishments looks magnificent even in its present bare, sombre and mournful role. What a spectacle of grandeur and splendour it must have presented in its days of regal glory when bedecked with scintillating fixtures, furnishings and trappings - such as a lush garden of rare fruit and flower trees, silver doors, gold railing, gem-studded marble grills and a resplendent Peacock Throne - its walls echoed the hurry and bustle of a powerful Rajput ruling family!

The visits that streams of visitors pay, day in and day out, hurrying from Agra railway station or the bus terminal to the Taj and back may be described as truly ''awful'' in more senses than one. Such visits have in no small measure contributed to spreading and reinforcing the misleading Taj legend. Worked up to a feeling of ''awe'' by the traditionally doled-out accounts of the Taj, the average visitor is already in a trance by the time he arrives on the scene. His thinking power is benumbed. His sensibilities are further deadened by the many parrot-like accounts drummed into his or her ears by voluntary or paid information-pedlars.

The visitor is so thoroughly dazed, stupefied, confused, overawed and hypnotized as to forget that around the basement tombs, the ground floor cenotaphs and in the first floor above the cenotaphs there are 23 rooms in the main octagonal central marble edifice of the Taj Mahal. This was the pearl-white central Rajput marble temple palace. The only changes which Shahjahan seems to have made in it are : laying Koranic texts on the walls and around the arches and raising a burial mound in the basement and cenotaphs in the Peacock Throne room. Contrary to popular belief, Koranic texts occupy only an infinitesimal fraction of the immense wall area, and that too in the flat surfaces around the arches.

Visitors coming away from the Taj generally carry the impression that there is just one room in the basement for the graves and another above that for the cenotaphs. They express surprise if told that on the three marble floors together there are 23 rooms and inside the marble plinth are 1089 rooms which add up to the dimensions of a temple palace.

But that is not all. Below the marble platform down to the basement under the Yamuna level are perhaps three more floors made up of scores of rooms.

As one proceeds from the city towards the Taj, even while the outermost entrance to its precincts is yet half a mile away, one sees a redstone tower half buried in the ground on the right just about ten yards from the road.. From the stone tower a wall can be seen jutting out and disappearing in the rising ground at an angle oblique to the asphalt approach road. On either side one can also observe several tell-tale mounds covered with grass. These hillocks obviously formed defensive eminences when the Taj was being used as a temple palace, and had not yet been converted into a Muslim tomb.

The tower just mentioned shows that another protective wall, interspersed by watch towers, enclosed an extensive area around the Taj. This wall could be the one enclosing the Khawaspura and Jaisinghpura localities around the Taj, that is to say the Taj was the ruler's temple palace surrounded by the dwellings of the citizenry. Excavations ought to be undertaken to remove the debris concealing this wall on either side of the tower.

At the outermost entrance to the reception-quadrangle, as one approaches by the asphalt road from the town, are a number of redstone pavilions. All this shows that the Taj far from being built as a tomb formed the epicentre of an ancient Agra township.

Shahjahan's temperament being unable to tolerate the Rajput ownership of a fairyland temple-palace, he decided to render it unsuitable for habitation any longer and converted it into a mausoleum. The Taj Mahal is, therefore, yet another link in the 1000-year-old mediaeval Islamic tradition in India of the conversion of conquered Rajput palaces and temples into tombs. The same is repeated in nearby Fatehpur Sikri.

The minds of some have become so throughly conditioned to the traditional Taj legend that they would rather be left undisturbed in smug contemplation of Shahjahan's mythical love for Mumtaz as having led to the creation of the Taj, than be asked to substitute it by what may seem a less romantic but true account of the origin of the Taj. In fact the concept of the Taj having originated as a temple-palace is both more romantic and plausible than the idea that it is a doleful monument. But even so, for those who prefer delusion to history, and dogma to truth, there is neither any cure nor appeal. Such may include both lay readers as well as those who are called students, experts and scholars of history. Others with an open mind will of course ponder over the evidence assembled in the forgoing pages.

The present book must not, however, be regarded as the last word on the history of the building currently known as the Taj Mahal. In fact it is only the first in a new direction. What we claim to have succeeded in discovering is that the Taj Mahal is not a Muslim tomb of the 17th century but an ancient Hindu mansion. Whether it was originally built as a temple or palace or a temple-palace complex we are not yet sure since we lack the resources and authority to look into every nook and corner of that fabulous seven-storied building-complex.

The reader may have noted that in the introduction to our earlier book titled "Taj Mahal was A Rajput Palace", we had hazarded a guess that the Taj Mahal could have been a Hindu palace of the 4th century A. D. Later when we came across the admission

in the *Badshahnama* that Shahjahan commandeered the building known as Mansingh's mansion from Mansingh's grandson Jaisingh we found our hypothesis fully corroborated though it did not give us a clue as to which Hindu ruler commissioned the building.

Later we came across the so-called Bateshwar inscription mentioning that a crystal-white temple dedicated to Lord Shiva had been built in Agra around 1155 A. D.

It should now be the earnest endeavour of other researchers and of the Government's archaeology department to trace the Hindu history of the Taj Mahal. We have a strong suspicion that Shahjahan has hidden valuable evidence about the Hindu origin of the Taj Mahal in the marble platform, and beneath the chamber which is said to contain the real grave of Mumtaz. Keene has stated that even the two staircases leading to that storey had been sealed. Luckily one can now go down those stairs into the riverside flank of that storey. But the major portion of that storey lying directly underneath the marble platform has been sealed by Shahjahan with brick and lime.

Had Shahjahan nothing to hide, he wouldn't have sealed the stories underneath the marble platform down to the Yamuna river level and also possibly the basement under the ground surface.

None should underrate our discovery that the Taj Mahal is a pre-Shahjahan Hindu building merely because we have not been able to fully trace its pre-Shahjahan history.

Our finding that Shahjahan was not the creator of the Taj Mahal is as important as the finding of a court of law which convicts a person of theft of somebody else's property. The court's judgement does not in the least suffer in value merely because the court has not been able to find out who the owner of the stolen property was. Finding out the originator of the Taj could well form another phase of this research but our finding disproving the popular belief about Shahjahan being its creator constitutes the first very important phase pointing out the proper direction for future research.

We have not only been able to alert the world that it has been badly fooled by those who set up Shahjahan as the creator of the Taj Mahal but we have also been able to point out that the creator of the Taj was some earlier Hindu ruler. One very valuable aid

for further research provided by us is that we have pinpointed the very spot and the documents which may be hiding the crucial evidence unravelling the mystery about the origin of the Taj Mahal.

The future researcher should go to the redstone terrace at the back of the marble platform of the Taj Mahal. There at either end he will see staircases by either of which he may climb down to the storey underneath.

What one sees inside is astounding. On the riverside is first a row of 22 stately rooms with their walls and ceilings still bearing ancient Hindu paint patterns. The riverside wall-size ventilators have been hastily sealed with brick and lime by Shahjahan. This has been so crudely done that the filling remains unplastered and even has cavities for scaffolding. This shabby scene serves as an anti-climax because while historical fiction has for three long centuries credited Shahjahan with raising a fabulous, pearly white, soft-to-the-touch marble mausoleum, the hidden chambers reveal that he has been a cruel usurper and desecrator who did not hesitate to scar the magnificent building with crude walling-up of all nether stories. This is graphic proof of how Indian history has been turned topsyturvy when India was under foreign domination.

The rooms vary in size from 12 to 15 ft. in width and 20 to 22 ft. in length. The ceiling may be about 12 ft. high. These rooms are rendered dingy and dark by Shahjahan's walling up of the stately ventilators. Only when the two iron doors at the foot of the staircases on either flank are opened do they let in a streak of light.

Shahjahan had even taken care to seal the staircases with redstone slabs placed over their entrance in the redstone terrace. Those slabs were removed during subsequent British rule. The total length of that line of rooms running parallel to the river stream must be about 320 ft. Adjacent to the rooms, on the inner side is an equally long corridor rendered pitch-dark by Shahjahan's vandalism. The corridor is about 8.5 ft. wide and 320 ft. long. Its inner flank ends just where the marble plinth begins on the terrace above. In that wall (supporting the marble plinth above) flanking the corridor are two doorways at its eastern and western extremities. These lead to the storey immediately under the marble basement. Yet

these two doorways are crudely and suspiciously filled up with unplastered brick and lime. Their outer layer has crumbled and formed a heap of debris. But since ancient walls were very thick, a couple of labourers will have to be employed to remove the filling to allow entry to that hidden and sealed storey.

I strongly suspect that it is in those chambers that the real evidence regarding the Hindu origin of the Taj Mahal lies hidden. It may be that Shahjahan pulled out Sanskrit inscriptions and Hindu idols from the Taj premises, dumped them in the nether stories, sealed that evidence and barred the nether stories.

This is a graphic example of how very grossly remiss has the archaeology department of the Government of India been. Every year they must be spending millions of rupees on excavations in wild open country far away from their administrative centres and yet they have steadfastly avoided opening up the stories of the Taj Mahal from the redstone terrace downwards to the ground level and perhaps even to the basement lying underground below the riverbed level. Removing the brick fillings in the two doorways mentioned above won't cost even a paltry Rs. 100/- and yet very valuable evidence regarding the Taj Mahal itself and other aspects of its history may be hidden inside in the form of inscriptions, scriptures, treasure, idols, and mysterious stairs leading to other hidden apartments and stories.

Our discovery that the Taj Mahal far from being a 17th century Islamic mausoleum, is a much more ancient Hindu temple palace is having wide repercussions. Several travel agencies and guides have since ceased referring to the Taj Mahal as a monument of sensual love. On special request official guides inform the visitor of our version of the Taj as against the traditional concoction.

Another significant reaction was reflected in a speculative report carried by an Urdu daily of Pakistan titled *Nawa-i-Waqt* in one of its issues of February 1974. The report voiced the fear that the Government of India intended renaming the Taj Mahal as Ashok Mahal. The report sparked off a debate in Pakistan's National Assembly when a member urged the Pakistan Government to lodge a protest with the Indian Government against renaming the Taj.

Obviously a lot of misunderstanding pervades the whole issue.

Firstly, the Indian Government has never thought of renaming the Taj. Secondly, even the Indian Government cannot and will not arbitrarily rename the Taj Mahal as Ashok Mahal unless through research it first establishes that the Taj Mahal was actually built by the ancient king Ashok. Thirdly, even if the Taj Mahal has to be renamed Pakistan should have nothing to do with it because the Taj Mahal is Indian property. Fourthly the 300-year-old belief that the term Taj Mahal is Islamic because it derives from Mumtaz is itself misplaced. The term Mumtaz ends in a 'z' while the term 'Taj' ends in a 'j' which clearly indicates that 'Taj' has nothing to do with Mumtaz. Moreover it is highly doubtful whether Mumtaz is at all buried in the Taj since her grave is still intact in far away Burhanpur and also because in the entire Shahjahan legend no date is mentioned for Mumtaz's fancied burial in the Taj. It is also significant that the building was referred to as the "Taj" even prior to Mumtaz's burial in it as noted by the contemporary French visitor Tavernier.

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CHAPTER XXVI

BALANCE SHEET OF EVIDENCE

IN THIS chapter we recapitulate and summarize the evidence both for and against the traditional legend, to bring home to the reader the hollowness and falsity of the traditional Taj legend. We assess the strength and quantum of the evidence we have been able to marshal to establish that the Taj Mahal is an ancient Hindu temple-palace which was commandeered by Shahjahan and used with only superficial changes to serve as a tomb for one of his consorts.

In favour of the current belief that it was Shahjahan who built the Taj Mahal we concede only three points and even those not without substantial reservations :

1. We admit that there are four sepulchral mounds in the central chamber and the marble basement of the Taj which look like Muslim tombs, and could very well be those of Mumtaz, one of the thousands of consorts of Shahjahan, and of Shahjahan himself. After conceding this, we shall now point out our reservations. It is well known that many such mounds are fake. Such mounds have sometimes been found on the terraces of historic buildings where no dead person could be buried. Another reservation is that no specific burial date of Mumtaz being on record, it is highly doubtful whether she was buried in the Taj. Her burial period is mentioned as between six months and nine years of her death. Such vagueness, even after a special palatial mausoleum is stated to have been constructed for her body, is highly suspicious. Manucci, an officer in the service of the East India Company during Aurangzeb's time, has recorded that Akbar's tomb is empty. Who knows then whether Mumtaz's supposed tomb too is not empty. In spite of such weighty reservations we are ready to presume that only two cenotaphs could be those of Mumtaz and Shahjahan, not four.

2. The other point in favour of the traditional Taj legend is that Koranic texts have been inscribed on the tombs and along some of the arches. Our weighty reservation on this point is that such inscriptions exist on the exterior of the Adhai Din Ka Zopda in Ajmer and on the so-called Kutub Minar in Delhi, but they are known to be a forgery. The etchings on the Taj have therefore only dubious value.

3. The third point in favour of the current version is that some chronicles credit the building of the Taj to Shahjahan. Our reservations on this point are many. Muslim chroniclers were almost invariably individuals interested in earning an easy living by flattering and humouring the cruel despots under whom they lived. Yet, Shahjahan's own court chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori unequivocally admits that Arjumand Banu Begum alias Mumtaz lies buried in Mansingh's palace.

Having noted how lame even the scanty three points that could be advanced in favour of the traditional version of the Taj Mahal are, we shall summarize the weighty evidence that we have marshalled in the foregoing pages.

We have cited five direct proofs to establish that the Taj is an ancient Hindu palace. These are :

1. Shahjahan's own court chronicler Mulla Abdul Hamid's admission.

2. Mr. Nurul Hasan Siddiqui's book, *The City of Taj*, reiterates the same position.

3. Tavernier's testimony too establishes that a lofty palace had been obtained, and that it was a world tourist attraction even before Mumtaz's burial.

4. Emperor Shahjahan's great great grandfather Babur's *Memoirs* refer to the Taj Mahal 104 years before Mumtaz's death whose tomb the Taj is supposed to be.

5. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has been quoted to show that the Taj Mahal building complex comprises guest rooms, guard rooms and stables. These are all adjuncts of a temple palace but never of a tomb.

In addition to the above we have, in the foregoing pages, advanced

many other proofs as follows :

6. The very name Taj Mahal means a crown palace or a resplendent shrine (Teja Maha Alaya) and not a tomb.

7. Shahjahan's reign was as full of turmoil and warfare as that of most other Muslim rulers of India. He could not therefore, have any wealth, peace, security or inclination to launch on such an ambitious project as the Taj Mahal.

8. Shahjahan's lechery and profligacy ruled out any special attachment to Mumtaz, whose mausoleum the Taj has been misrepresented to be.

9. Shahjahan was cruel, hard-hearted and stingy; as such he could never have the artist's soft heart and a liberal patron's generosity to lavish wealth on a building to house a corpse.

10. Mull. Abdul Hamid Lahori, the court chronicler, mentions no architect, and estimates the cost of the work done to be only Rs. 40,00,000 which clearly shows that no new building was erected.

11. Shahjahan, whose reign was supposed to be a golden period of history, has not left even a scrap of authentic paper about the construction of the Taj Mahal. There are no authentic orders commissioning the Taj, no correspondence for the purchase or acquisition of the so-called site, no design drawings, no bills or receipts and no expense account sheets. Some of those usually produced or referred to have already been proved to be forgeries.

12. Had Shahjahan really been the conceiver of the Taj Mahal, he need not have specially instructed Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori not to forget mentioning or describing its 'construction' in the official chronicles, because the grandeur and majesty of the Taj as the finest achievement of a ruling monarch could never be lost sight of by a paid court chronicler.

13. That Shahjahan could not even in his wildest dreams conceive undertaking such a gorgeous project is apparent from the fact that even the Muslim accounts tell us that he made the workers toil on meagre rations without giving them any cash payment. Tavernier tells us that Shahjahan could not marshal even timber enough for as much as scaffolding. Some accounts have also pointed out that Shahjahan made Rajas and Mahrajas pay a large part of the "cost".

So even the additions and alterations required in converting a Hindu palace to the semblance of a Muslim tomb were made by compelling labourers to toil for a mere meagre food allocation and by imposing levies on subservient chieftains.

14. If a stupendous monument like the Taj Mahal were specially built for the burial of a consort, there would be a ceremonial burial date and it would not go unrecorded. But not only is the burial date not mentioned but even the approximate period during which Arjumand Banu Begum may have been buried in the Taj Mahal varies from six months to nine years of her death.

15. Mumtaz was married to Shahjahan when the latter was 21 years old. Royal children in his times used to be married much before they entered their teens. This shows that Arjumand Banu was Shahjahan's umpteenth wife. There was thus no reason why she should have been buried in a special monument.

16. Having been a commoner by birth Arjumand Banu was not entitled to a special monument.

17. History makes no special mention of any out-of-the-way attachment or romance between the two, unlike that of Jahangir and Nurjahan. This shows that the story of their love is a concoction seeking to justify the myth about the building of the Taj over her body.

18. Shahjahan was no patron of art. Had he been one, he would not have had the heart to chop off the hands of those who are said to have toiled to 'build' the monument for his wife. An art lover, especially one disconsolate on his wife's death, would not indulge in an orgy of maiming skilful craftsmen. But the maiming story is apparently true because made to toil mercilessly on meagre rations on a palace usurped from its erstwhile Hindu master, the infuriated workmen broke out in revolt.

19. There is no record in history that Shahjahan had any special infatuation for Mumtaz. In fact history records that he used to run after various other women from his own daughter to [illegible] maids.

20. The existence of the landing ghat at the rear suggests a temple-palace, not a tomb.

21. Even the central marble structure consists of a [illegible]

marble palace unit which is superfluous for a tomb.

22. The plan tallies with ancient Hindu architectural design and specifications.

23. The entire Taj building consists of over 1000 rooms along its corridors, in the two basements, on the upper floors and in its numerous towers, which clearly bears out the contention that it was meant to be a temple-palace.

24. The many annexes, guard and guest rooms, etc. prove that it is a temple-palace. The pleasure pavilions in the Taj premises could never form part of a tomb but only of a palace

25. The Taj complex houses a pair of Nakkar Khanas, i.e. drum houses. Drum houses are not only superfluous in a tomb but is a positive misfit because a departed soul needs peace and rest. On the other hand a drum house is a necessary concomittant of a temple-palace because drum beats are used to herald royal arrivals and departures, summoning of the townsfolk for royal announcements and proclamations and announce divine worship time.

26. The Taj building complex also contains a cowpen which used to be part of all Hindu royal and temple premises.

27. The Sanskrit words "Kalas" and "pranchi" (fenced off open spaces around the dome and other structures) would never have been in the Taj premises bad it originated as a Muslim tomb.

28. The decorative patterns and motifs throughout the Taj Mahal are not only entirely of Indian flora but also of sacred Hindu emblems like the lotus, which infidel characteristics, according to Islamic beliefs, would never allow any peace to the soul of the Muslim lady, if any, lying buried beneath.

29. The galleries, arches, supporting brackets and cupolas are entirely in the Hindu style such as can been seen all over Rajasthan.

30. Like every other suspicious aspect of the Taj, its period of construction is variously stated to be 10, 12, 13, 17 or 22 years, which again proves that the traditional story is a concoction.

31. Even Tavernier's testimony that he saw the commencement and the end of this work, while weakening the traditional case, strengthens ours.

32. The reports that Shahjahan levied large amounts on Rajas and Maharajas and that the so-called (tampering) work dragged on over 10, 12, 13, 17 or even 22 years are all very true details. We fully accept them. They fit in with our case. Since Shahjahan was too shrewd and hard-headed to spend anything out of his own treasury, and would lose no opportunity of taxing and persecuting the local people, he made political capital even out of the death of his own wife. While on the one hand he compelled the Rajas and Maharajas to pay for the alterations to the temple-palace owned by one of their own kith and kin, so that it may be converted into a tomb, he made the labourers and artisans toil on a meagre ration. That is why the transformation work dragged on at a snail's pace over a long period.

33. The designers are variously mentioned by Western scholars to be Europeans, and are claimed by Muslims to be Muslims, while the Imperial Library Manuscript contains Hindu names. What greater proof is needed of the utter falsity of the traditional Taj story?

34. The Taj Mahal had a grand garden. A graveyard never boasts of luscious fruit and fragrant flower trees, since the idea of enjoying the fruit and flowers of a graveyard orchard is revolting. The garden could therefore, only have been the adjunct of a palace.

35. The trees, moreover, were those bearing Sanskrit names, and select sacred plants at that, like Ketaki, Jai, Jui, Champa, Maulashree, Harshringar and Bel.

36.The designer of the Taj is unknown.

37. Far from causing him any expenditure, the Taj proved to be a veritable gold mine for Shahjahan. While Arjumand Banu was buried in a stripped, cold, stone temple palace, the building was robbed of all its costly trappings which were removed to Shahjahan's treasury.

38. The Taj Palace is located in the twin township of Jaisinghpura and Khawaspura which are Rajput words, not Muslim. "Pura" in Sanskrit signifies a busy locality and not an open plot of land, as is sometimes claimed.

39. The Taj Mahal entrance faces south. Had it been a Muslim building it should have faced west.

40. Its decorative and marble work tallies exactly with that in the Amer (Jaipur) palace built circa 967.

41. The Taj temple palace has various other annexes outside its outer peripheral redstone wall, meant for courtiers and palace staff.

42. Akbar on his early visits to Agra used to stay in Khawaspura and Jaisinghpura, which clearly shows that he stayed in the Taj.

43. Bernier, another foreign visitor to Shahjahan's court, tells us that the nether chambers had a rare magnificence and no non-Muslim was allowed entry to them. That shows the hush-hush secrecy maintained about them.

44. Even the term Taj Mahal doesn't figure in any Mogul court records.

45. An English visitor, Peter Mundy who was in India only for about a year after Mumtaz's death mentions the Taj Mahal as one of the most spectacular buildings.

Innumerable such points could be brought up in favour of our contention but we believe we have said encough to drive the point home to the reader.

Shahjahan's sacrilege of the Hindu Taj temple-palace by misusing it as an Islamic graveyard ought to be rectified by removing Arjumand Banu's remains, if they really are in the Taj Mahal, to her original grave, still existing in Burhanpur. Likewise, Shahjahan's remains should also be interred in or near his wife's grave, since all versions claim that he was deeply attached to her. To do academic justice, the Taj Mahal should then be cleared of the cenotaphs and re-consecrated as a Shiva temple

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CHAPTER XXVIII

METHODOLOGY THAT LED TO THE DISCOVERY

DURING OUR discussions with eminent historians we often found them side-tracking the issue of the soundness of our historical discoveries by questioning the validity of our methodology. That attitude of finding some fault or the other to avoid the truth is illustrated by the Aesop's Fables story in which a wolf having made up his mind to devour a lamb accused the latter or latter's father of maligning the wolf. We, therefore, read the works of some leading lights of historical methodology who command the implicit respect and allegiance of teachers and professors of history all over the world.

Imagine the pleasant shock which we experienced when we found that the masters of the subject have emphasized the very principles which we have been instinctively following and stressing in our historic discoveries. Contrarily, the very teachers and professors and researchers of history who swear by those masters' methods have flouted almost every principle which the latter stress as very important. That explains why Indian history, as currently taught and presented, abounds in misconceptions galore of the dimensions of serious errors.

A few instances of these errors are : 1. The assertion that Akbar was great and noble, though his deeds justify his being the great grandfather[1] of the tyrannical Aurangzeb. 2. Crediting rulers like Sher Shah and Ferozshah Tughlak with having built many roads, forts, palaces and townships and presiding over model administrations though their regimes were tales of unrelieved plunder and repression.

1. Read this author's book titled *Who Says Akbar Was Great*?

3. The failure to realise that the so-called mediaeval Muslim tombs and mosques built in Hindu style are all pre-Muslim captured Hindu buildings.

All such errors are the result of a total neglect of some very basic rules of historical methodology. The first requirement of historical research is a detective-type approach. Prof. W. H. Walsh says[2], "When a historian reads a statement in one or the other of the 'original sources' he does not automatically accept it. His attitude to it, if he knows his job, is always critical. He has to decide whether or not to believe."

Collingwood compares[3] a historian's procedure with that of a detective. Prof. Walsh adds, "The case of the historian is exactly parallel. He also must be prepared if necessary to doubt even his firmest beliefs."

Warning the historian against gullibility, Prof. Walsh observes,[4] "We can believe that there is good evidence for the past without believing that any propositions about it are beyond question... historical facts have in every case to be established : They are never simply given."

Methodologists[5] Langlois and Seignbos advise historians to approach every affirmation with an *a priori* distrust. The historian, they say, must begin by doubting. In Indian historical research glaring discrepancies, anomalies, contradictions and absurdities have been allowed to pass unquestioned or have been glossed over. For instance, claims such as that the Kutub Minar was built by Kutubuddin or by Altmash or by Allauddin Khilji or by Ferozshah Tughlak or by all of them partly.

Another methodologist, F. C. S. Schiller, also affirms,[6] "Doubt is the chief stimulus to inquiry, to research and so to discovery. Doubt sets in when an alleged truth fails to satisfy us."

Despite such great emphasis laid on "doubt" and "suspicion"

2. P. 19, *Practising Historian* by Prof. W. H. Walsh.
3. P. 12, *The Idea of History*, by R.C. Collingwood.
4. P. 80 *Practising Historian*, ibid.
5. P. 102 *History - Its Purpose and Method* by Dr. G. J. Renier.
6. PP. 77-78 *Our Human Truths* by F. C. S. Schiller.

and on the detective-type approach in historical research by masters of historical methodology, Indian histories are based on the bland assertions of undependable mediaeval Muslim chronicles, which are mere panegyrics. Sir H. M. Elliot[7] calls them "impudent and interested frauds." Dr. Tessitori considers them unreliable. And yet our histories call Tughlakabad a fort by a Tughlak because it bears his name, withoug realising that every gate-crasher gives his own name to an occupied building, and without asking whether he had the need, time, money, acumen, know-how, peace and security to build it; and if at all he built it, why he deserted it soon afterwards. In the same gullible vein, Ahmedabad is credited to Ahmadshah, and Firozabad to Firozshah. If such is the basis of our historical conclusions, then Allahabad must be admitted to have been founded by Allah himself.

The other essential for historical research is a legal approach. A magistrate taking down a confession by a suspect is enjoined by law[8] to forewarn the suspect that he is not bound to make a confession, but if he chooses to make one, his statement would be used against him but not in his favour. Muslim chronicles are such interested statements and must, if at all, be used to confront the parties in whose favour they make chauvinistic claims, but never in their favour.

When we argue against placing any faith in the accounts of a Shams-i-Shiraz Afif or Abul Fazl, or when we assert that everything that a Bernier, Tavernier or Monserrate may have written must never be accepted as Gospel truth, we do not mean that they should never be consulted or quoted. Such a view again will be most illogical and would detract from judicial methods of inquiry, which we intend to deal with hereafter. It would not be right to insist that we either believe every word of the above chroniclers and travellers or that we do not believe any. It cannot be a "take it or leave it" affair. Admissibility of evidence is never a package deal. Every word has to be carefully listened to, its motivation, and the circumstances in which it may have been recorded, have to be carefully gone into. Sometimes, after such scrutiny, some statements

7. Elliot & Dowson, *History*, preface.
8. Indian Criminal Procedure Code.

may be tentatively accepted for corroboration from other sources, some could be accepted outright, while others could be rejected as frauds.

Lord Sankey in his address[8] to the Historical Association, London, in 1939, underlined the principles of legal approach, mentioned above, stressing the resemblance between the work of the historian and that of the lawyer.

Another well known methodologist, Dr. G. J. Renier, also holds the same view. He says, "The law by its fastidious adherence to the rules of evidence deliberately exercises self-control and sacrifices again and again its chances of reaching a conclusion. Law is justifiably more exacting and more critical in its handling of evidence than the historian who lives in a world of relativity."[10]

Current Indian histories have shown scant respect for such legal marshalling and sifting of evidence. For example, even though half-a-dozen names are being bandied about as architects of the Taj Mahal, its period of construction varies from 10 to 22 years, its cost is speculated to be anywhere between Rs. 400,000 and Rs. 91,700,000 and the *Tarikh-i-Taj Mahal* document has been branded a forgery by Keene, to name only a few of the loopholes in the Shahjahan legend, nobody seems to smell a rat because the historical face lacks a legal "nose." Such a poor case would be thrown out of any law court at the very first hearing. But in our histories it is being paraded as the irrefutable truth.

The third aid necessary for historical research is logic. Logic is justly called the science of sciences because it deals with faultless reasoning which is a basic requirement for arriving at correct conclusions in any field.

Let us take a practical example. If a corpse bears a note that the deceased has committed suicide for which nobody should be blamed, but if a stab wound is discovered in the body's back, the logical conclusion would be that the death is the result of murder and the note is a planted forgery. In an extreme case it could

9. P. 119 *History - Its Purpose and Method*, Ibid.

10. P. 120, Ibid.

even be that the deceased had started with that note on him intending to commit suicide but was murdered in the meantime. In such a case the note would be genuine and yet it would fail to substantiate the death as a suicide to a truly legal mind, because of the stab wound in the body's back. Such logical and legal discrimination in refuting the written word with concrete circumstantial evidence has been sadly lacking in arriving at many of our historical conclusions.

A fourth requirement for historical research is original thinking. In Indian history unfortunately, every person sporting a degree in history, or employed in teaching history or serving in a department or institution dealing in history is looked upon both by the lay public and by himself as an historian. Prof. Walsh observes,[11] "Historians often lack the insight required for an adequate reconstruction... and find themselves driven to recite isolated facts without being able to fit them in a coherent picture. The process of imaginative reliving is central in historical thinking. Collingwood[12] reports a statement by Bradley that the historian's criterion is something he brings with him to the study of the evidence, and this something is simply himself."

A fifth postulate of historical research is that the researcher-historian must not suffer from a false sense of loyalty to traditionally handed-down notions. In other words, a real historian should be something of a 'rebel' and not a trade-unionist. One afraid to raise the standard of his conviction can never be a true researcher in any field, let alone history. Dr Renier reassures the researcher that "no blind surrender to his predecessors is demanded from the historian." Prof. Walsh also enjoins on the true historian to freely use general knowledge of every kind, trivial and technical, in checking up facts or concepts handed down to him. In India, the tendency has been just the contrary, namely, to meticulously toe the traditional line, and every attempt to question traditional dogmas is branded as rank heresy and quackery.

We wonder what political, communal, bureaucratic or

11. P. 32, *Practising Historian*, Ibid.
12. P. 160, *History - Its Purpose and Method*, Ibid.

servitudinal malady afflicts the teacher or professor of history so as to permanently gag him against raising any hue and cry about the innumerable absurdities that masquerade in Indian and world history as sanctimonious and profound truths?

Will he not be ever able to break free from the shackles of false academic loyalties! Must he spend his life in the ignominy of repeating the self-same falsehoods even after we have exposed the fraud in them!

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CHAPTER XXIX

SOME CLARIFICATIONS

SEVERAL READERS of this book no doubt realizing now that the Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal is not after all that reliable as had been presumed might still entertain some doubts as I visualise from the letters they write to me or questions they ask me at public meetings I address on my historical findings.

Those doubts persisting despite my elaborate demolition of the Shahjahan legend graphically illustrate the damage that a lie repeated over centuries can do to the rationality of men all over the world. It is, therefore, that I propose to answer those questions in this chapter.

Question : While you have pointed out a number of discrepancies in the traditional Shahjahan legend how is it you have not adduced any positive evidence that the Taj Mahal was built by Hindu rulers in pre-Muslim times?

The several presumptions in the above question are not correct. Firstly, a number of positive proofs have been adduced in the preceding chapters. For instance Shahjahan's own court chronicle, the Badshahnama, has been cited to show that what was known as Raja Mansingh's mansion was taken over from his grandson Jaisingh for Mumtaz's burial. Tavernier has also been quoted to say that the "Tas-i-Macan", i.e. a building called the "Taj" which existed already was purposely chosen by Shahjahan for Mumtaz's burial because it was a world attraction. The third positive proof is that of the Sanskrit inscription indicating that the Taj Mahal could be an earlier temple known as the Tejo-Maha-Alaya. The fourth positive proof consists of such graphic details as the trident pinnacle, cobra patterns, the mention of 'Bel' trees in the garden and embossed flower-patterns on marble panels surrounding the cenotaph chamber displaying the sacred Hindu letter "OM"

The fifth positive proof is of Aurangzeb's letter. The other presumption that 'negative' proofs are not enough is not correct. In law-courts murderers and cheats are being convicted everyday all over the world on the basis of so-called 'negative' evidence. Hardly is anybody caught actually murdering or cheating. Criminals are detected and convicted days or years after the crime when some tell-tale details are discovered later. Take the case of a man in tatters trying to sell off a costly diamond. The very incongruity of such a situation is enough for any citizen to detain the pedlar of the diamond and charge him for fraud or theft. Because in such a case either his beggarly dress must be a disguise, or the so-called diamond may be a fake or his ownership of the diamond must not be legal. In such an instance one does not desist from detaining the suspect merely because one has not seen him steal the diamond. So what lay-men mistake to be 'negative' are in fact very positive proofs of the kind that are accepted in all day-to-day affairs. Another point to be noted is that when the claim of Shahjahan to the Taj Mahal is disproved, that building, situated as it is in Hindusthan, automatically becomes Hindu property.

Question : Why haven't you given a precise Hindu history of the Taj Mahal ?

That is because all the research that needs to be done regarding the Taj Mahal has not yet been done. One should have all the keys to all the seven-storied buildings in the complex and the resources and authority to open the blocked chambers of the Taj Mahal. Many of its underground chambers which have been sealed by Shahjahan with brick and lime need to be opened up and searched. It is my feeling that some very decisive evidence lies hidden in those sealed chambers. They could contain Sanskrit inscriptions, Hindu idols, scriptures and coins laying bare the pre-Shahjahan history of that building. The multi-storeyed well in the Taj premises must also be drained of its water to look for similar evidence at its bottom. What I have succeeded in establishing so far is that the Taj Mahal is definitely a centuries old Hindu building commandeered by Shahjahan. As to which Hindu ruler actually commissioned it and for what purpose needs to be further investigated. That the Congress Goverment in power is itself blocking all efforts to establish the true origin of the Taj Mahal is apparent

from the replies that I and Mr. M. H. Mills have received. Those government of India replies have been reproduced earlier in this volume.

Question : Since Shahjahan wanted to palm off the building as his wife's tomb why did he not pull-out the trident pinnacle and other Hindu motifs ?

Shahjahan himself never intended to lay any false claim to the Taj Mahal as his own construction since his court chronicler openly admits having commandeered it from Jaisingh. Moreover even if Shahjahan had desired to misrepresent the building as his own creation that was an impossible task because Shahjahan's contemporaries themselves had participated in taking possession of the Taj Mahal from Jaisingh and erecting Mumtaz's grave inside it. Shahjahan may have wanted to pull-out the Hindu trident pinnacle of the Taj out of fanatic Muslim hatred for Hindu motifs but had he done that, the dome would have had a gaping hole which would have resulted in flooding the building when it rained. Shahjahan and his courtiers were too shrewd to allow their fanaticism to run away with their discretion. The Muslims of those times did not have the knowhow to repair the crack or hole left by the trident shaft had it been pulled out. The trident shaft towers over 31 ft. high above the centre of the dome. To stand erect to such height quite a length of the pinnacle shaft must be embeded deep into the dome. It was therefore impossible to pull it out from its root without doing damage to the dome.

Question : Is not the pinnacle shaft a Muslim crescent ?

The pinnacle shaft is not a Muslim crescent. A Muslim crescent is never horizontal. The Muslim crescent is also almost a complete circle except for a little gap at its head for the star. Another distinguishing trait is that a Muslim crescent is never bisected by a central shaft jutting out from its centre. The pinnacle above the Taj Mahal dome is a Hindu motif because it has a central shaft bisecting a horizontal curved metal piece which looks like the segment of a semicircle. A full-scale replica of that pinnacle has been inlaid in the red-stone courtyard to the east of the Taj Mahal. One may closely study it to get a real idea of what the pinnacle over the dome looks like. There one may clearly see the bulbous shaft ending

in a sacred Hindu kalash (pot) with two leaf-patterns bending out on either side and supporting the holy Hindu coconut at the top. Hindu and Buddhist temples in the Himalayan foothills have identical pinnacles.

Question : Is not the pinnacle shaft on the dome a lightning-conductor hoisted by the then British administration ?

This is one of the many popular misconceptions. The trident pinnacle fixed over the dome by the ancient Hindus may be a good lightning conductor for all we know, but it has not been put there by the British.

Question : Are not the words Allaho Akbar (God is Great) inscribed in Persian over the pinnacle ?

So what ! Shahjahan had Persian lettering scrawled all over the Taj Mahal and its ancillary buildings after misappropriating that estate. If therefore some Persian lettering is inscribed also on the pinnacle it does not prove that Shahjahan built the Taj Mahal. On the other hand that over-writing only proves that Shahjahan was a usurper of the building because those words Allaho-Akbar do not occur on the full-scale replica inlaid in the red-stone courtyard. Had Shahjahan been the builder of the Taj the words appearing on the metal pinnacle on the dome should have appeared even on the replica in the courtyard. In fact it was the Britisher Cunningham who stencilled it.

Question : Who started the myth that Shahjahan built the Taj ?

The myth was floated by some latter-day Muslim chauvinists and court-flatterers who felt it degrading to admit that Shahjahan had buried his wife in a secondhand commandeered Hindu mansion. By constant repetition thereafter people came to believe the myth. Moreover the myth also had its origin in a popular misconception. Since all extant mediaeval Hindu buildings are littered with Muslim graves visitors guided to those buildings associate those buildings with the individual buried inside. In course of time the building came to be misbelieved as having been erected for the grave. Actually the building existed earlier and the Muslim grave inside was only a later graft in a captured Hindu building. In most cases the graves are all fake. The triangular grave mounds were only erected as

a misleading subterfuge to claim the building forever for Islam without ever having to employ even so much as a watchman. In this the mediaeval Muslims displayed an uncanny awareness of the disinclination of the Hindu to disturb even fake religious symbols. This Muslim practice of planting false tombs overnight and claiming open land or buildings continues to our own day.

Question : Why are Western visitors with all their predilection for research and learning not convinced about the falsity of the Shahjahan legend of the Taj ?

It is wrong to believe that the average Westerner has a greater concern for academic truth or a greater attachment for knowledge and research than an average Indian. A Westerner is as shallow and hypocritical as any other human. As a third person from a third country he hardly cares whether a building in India is attributed to one person or another. The Western visitor is only interested in getting a visual impression of the building. The Western visitor is also easily carried away by the sentimentalism about sexual love. In this respect his mental calibre must be rated much below that of an average Indian. A Westerner does not realize that man's sexual craving for a woman is a debilitating, incapacitating emotion. That emotion never infuses or inspires creative activity. A tourist from a Western country also lacks the time and inclination to enter into or look into any local controversy about the originator of a building. Moreover such a visitor is prone to be guided by the government version, and regard dissident versions with suspicion as attempts at cranky sensation-mongering. Western academicians and journalists with a centuries old tradition of lustily alluding to Shahjahan as the creator of the Taj now find it difficult to admit their blunder. Consequently Western news media go out of their way to suppress all news about the Hindu origin of the Taj Mahal. A few Westerners have, however, cared to write to me about their being convinced of my Taj thesis.

Question : Why have not history teachers and professors accepted your version ?

A number of history teachers and professors have clearly indicated their firm belief in my thesis that the Taj Mahal is a Hindu building. They have conveyed their concurrence in my finding through letters

and personal contact and by quoting me in their books, articles, research papers and lectures. Most of those who have not openly sided with me have some reason of their own namely either they are too reticent or are scared to jettison the long-accepted belief, or are afraid that they would be victimised by their bosses, or professionally ostracized, or have too deep religious or political commitments to accept even a research finding which, they feel, goes to the credit of the Hindus. Some top brass of history in the universities and those manning the archaeology, archives and tourism departments of the Government of India are afraid that admitting the hollowness of the Shahjahan legend of the Taj would cause them considerable professional loss of face and embarrassment. As wage-earners guided by worldly wisdom they prefer keeping silent and sponsoring or teaching only the Government-stamped version. The average man prefers to go about peacefully with his avocation and not get embroiled in any agitaton even for the truth. He would with as much unconcern teach the new finding about the Taj Mahal if and when that is served to him on the platter of Government acceptance.

A very large section of Muslims is generally prone to avoid admitting the newly discovered truth about the Taj Mahal considering it to be a great personal loss to their chauvinistic prestige. Some of them even go to the extent of resisting and suppressing this new finding and addressig to me letters of weird threats and vile abuse.

Top officials of archaeology and archives faculties and of institutions like the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, the Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla, and the Royal Asiatic Society, London, have been trying to look away from this finding about the Taj Mahal from a sense of the deepest embarrassment for having backed up throughout their working lives a concept so devoid of truth as the Shahjahan legend of the Taj.

Those manning university posts in history and their counterparts in other institutions and offices who feel committed to the Shahjahan legend by virtue of the books and articles they may have published, the papers they may have written and the doctoral students they might have coached lack the generosity or honesty to admit that

they have been backing and propagating a baseless concept.

Such are the various motives arising from a weakness of the human character which have made teachers, professors and officials dealing with history shut their eyes, ears and minds against this new finding about the Taj Mahal.

Question : Why did rulers like Shivaji not recapture the Taj Mahal? If it were a Hindu building he should have known it?

This question is based on a misconception. India teemed with magnificent buildings and massive forts. India had hundreds of buildings as beautiful as the Taj Mahal. Many such are mentioned by Muslim chroniclers themselves. Gaping with wonder, Muslim chroniclers, for instance, have noted that there were in Vidisha and Mathura magnificent and towering mansions / temples which could not be recreated even if five thousand labourers worked for 200 years. It is therefore wrong to think that the Taj Mahal was the only magnificent building in India on which all Indians should have concentrated to prevent it from falling into the hands of alien Islamic invaders. When the whole of India from Attock in the far north to Arcot in the far south had passed into Muslim hands with all its mansions, temples and forts, it does not stand to reason to demand why the Taj Mahal alone could not be saved. And the implied inference that since no Hindu seems to have been aware of the Taj Mahal, it must not have been a Hindu building is wrong. Warrior- patriots like Shivaji were in fact waging a war to free the whole of India from the stranglehold of alien invaders. In doing so their very object was to regain control and ownership of all buildings and territory from the Indus to Cape Comorin. Moreover rulers like Shivaji had not developed enough strength to oust the Mogul as is apparent from Mogul rule continuing till 1858.

Question : If the Taj Mahal was known as Mansingh's Manzil, the Jaipur court papers should offer some clue?

Of course they should. But unfortunately the royal Jaipur archives known as Pothi Khana and Kapad-dwara have been under the ruler's own lock and key and practically no one has been allowed to study the documents. The reason was probably that the documents record intimate domestic dealings with the alien [illegible] which were considered most despicable and unworthy in contemporary [illegible]

society. A very graphic illustration of how such records have been severely suppressed is provided by the obliteration of even the names of the Jaipur princesses who were forcibly carried away to the Mogul harems. At a time, therefore, when both Jaipur territory and Jaipur's royal women were being systematically abducted and raped by the alien Muslim invaders it will need all the ingenuity that an astute researcher can muster to trail the rape of the Taj Mahal through a maze of court papers which may have tried to glibly gloss over the seizure of this prized possession of the Jaipur royal house. I have met or heard of a few contemporary individuals who styling themselves to be historians claim to have skipped through some papers of the Pothi Khana. They vaguely speak of having seen a document purporting to be a deed by which an open plot of land in Agra was sold by Jaisingh to Shahjahan for building the Taj Mahal on. One such person I met was Dr. A. L. Srivastava, head of the Department of History of the Agra University for a number of years. When asked what was the purchase price mentioned in the document he said there was none. One may well measure the professional calibre of such persons from the pathetic faith they put ipso facto in such a shady document. Talking of a purchase document which contains no purchase price is like talking of Hamlet who was not the prince of Denmark. Such people wearing Anglo-Muslim blinkers are incapacitated from carrying out any meaningful research in matters which require careful James Bond type tracking. These people lack both the legal training which can weed out vital evidence from the misleading and a lively rational, logical faculty which can quickly react to missing or misleading links. All papers relating to Jaisingh's transactions with the Moguls, especially those between the years 1628 and 1632 A. D., should be subjected to a very close scrutiny to find some clue at the Jaipur end to the rape of the Taj Mahal. The ex-Maharaja of Jaipur and the Director of the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner have since informed me that there is no purchase document. It is also possible that the Taj Mahal was not built by the Jaipur royal house but came to them through conquest, purchase or exchange or as a gift or dowry. Actually documents numbered R-176 and 177 in the Kapad-dwara archives in the City Palace Museum in Jaipur are Shahjahan's confiscation orders of the Taj Mahal owned by

Jaisingh. That Museum should be compelled to publish those two critical documents.

Question : If the Taj Mahal is a magnificent Hindu building how is it there is no mention of it earlier?

Historians and the lay public lulled into the belief that the Taj Mahal was built by Shahjahan had become mentally incapacitated to detect any reference to it earlier. Hereafter if they re-read their source-books with eyes wide open they may detect a number of references to the Taj Mahal. In this book itself it has been shown that the Mogul emperor Babur, the great great grandfather of Shahajahan, does mention the Taj Mahal and in fact Babur died in the Taj Mahal. Babur's daughter Gulbadan Begum is also shown to have alluded to the Taj Mahal. Tamerlain was also mesmerised by the Taj Mahal. A similar intelligent revision of all previous records and chronicles could reveal many more references. Moreover with names of roads and localities getting changed with every new regime it becomes difficult to identify what we call the Taj Mahal in our own day with what it may have been called in different eras. Another difficulty is that when in a city there are many majestic and magnificent mansions it is difficult for a contemporary record to establish in specific description their separate identity. What a writer would say about every such building is that it is magnificent and grand and massive. Yet another difficulty is that if in the turmoil of Muslim invasions and massacres a building like the Taj Mahal changes hands and is used as a temple once and a mansion later, or vice versa, one loses track of the identity of the building.

Question : Why did not the Hindu ruler who lost possession of the Taj Mahal leave any record or persist in his claim?

This is just like asking why all those who lost possession of forts, temples, mansions, homes, shops, gardens or farms from Kashmir to Cape Comorin in the millenium of Muslim invasions and conquest from Mohammad-bin-Kasim onwards do not come forward in our own day to press their claims through their descendants? When large tracts of a country are lost to foreign invaders and the subject people are massacred or killed in battle and captured buildings are occupied by the enemy for hundreds of years, can one expect the ousted owner and his descendants

to hang on to the outer door of the building indefinitely in the hope that at some remote date he or some of his descendants would be restored to the ownership of the building ! Do not epidemics, massacres, riots, earthquakes and exigencies of service change the entire pattern of life, and displace people from their original surroundings even in one's own life time ! Do not families get extinct ? Do not families ramify into several branches without anybody remembering even the name of the common ancestor in the direct line of genealogical ascent ? And in such vicissitudes spread over a thousand years was it possible for anybody to retain original documents ? Would they not get lost, stolen, burnt, eaten up by rodents or termites or get destroyed by water ?

Question : Do you mean to say that the present Taj Mahal was built by Shahjahan after demolishing an earlier Hindu building ?

No. The whole point of this book is to convince the reader that the Taj Mahal as it stands today, as each one of us sees it today, is the very building that Shahjahan commandeered. If at all he did anything to it I will say he disfigured and despoiled it but he did not add anything to its beauty or its size. The original Hindu Taj Mahal was much more beautiful. Its pearly-white walls now look scarred with blue worm-like lettering. The original Hindu temple-palace complex had many more pavilions and ancillary buildings as is apparent from the ruins all around. The Taj Mahal we see today is a truncated and disfigured monument. Several of its stories from the marble plinth to the basement below the Yamuna level lie hidden, plundered, neglected and sealed. The lovely painted designs that adorned the walls of those underground chambers have been scrubbed by the alien vandal.

Question : Does it make any difference whether one views the Taj Mahal as a Muslim tomb or as a Hindu temple-palace complex ?

It certainly makes a world of difference. Firstly if one is told that one is to see a Muslim tomb one peeps into the room sheltering the cenotaphs and comes away calling it a day. This makes one oblivious to the grandeur that abounds in the Taj building complex.

It also makes one impervious to any rational ideas that should otherwise suggest themselves when one steps into a fabulous building complex of the dimensions of the Taj Mahal. If one is made conscious of being in a temple-palace complex one would have enough time on hand and take great care to go into every nook and corner of every storey to have a visual fill and feel of the varandahs, corridors, halls, porticos, ante-chambers, nether-chambers, galleries, terraces, gateways, stables, outhouses and the like. All visitors to the Taj Mahal should hereafter not only spare enough time to make a round of the Taj building complex from the inner side from end to end and from bottom to top but they should also make it a point to take a peripheral round of the premises from the outside and inspect the many red stone mansions that lie just outside the surrounding massive wall. If the public decides to exercise this right of theirs, the Government would be compelled to throw open the closed, barred and concealed apartments of the multi-storeyed Taj Mahal to the public. There is no reason why a Government charging an entrance fee should restrict public entry only to the cenotaph chambers. So long as the Government and the public were duped into believing that the Taj Mahal is nothing but a graveyard, such restricted entry may have been alright but hereafter both the Government and the public must wake up to their respective duties regarding the assessment of the Taj temple-palace-complex.

Question : Even if a Hindu temple palace complex has been misused by Shahjahan as a tomb why not leave it at that, why rake up the past ?

This question raises several important issues. Firstly, just as a country which has lost its freedom to a foreign invader considers it a point of honour to regain it, similarly a building subjected to misuse should be restored to its original role. Secondly, studying the Taj Mahal as a Hindu temple palace complex or a Muslim tomb makes a world of difference to one's ideas about its antiquity, the style of architecture, the cost incurred and the quality and size of the accommodation provided. A third consideration is that research ought to be a continuing process in every field wherever truth is covered up by myth and the Taj Mahal should be no exception. Fourthly, history concerns itself exclusively with the past, and so

when dealing with history it is absurd to ask why rake up the past? History itself is nothing less and nothing more than 'raking up the past.' Had the public in its wisdom ever considered history to be an unnecessary or superfluous subject it would have banned it by legislation. Since no country in the world has done so it is implied that the public wants historical research to go on doggedly ahead revealing truths where they lie hidden under a pile of falsehoods. Moreover pure research sans its immediate applicability is as important in the field of history as in physical sciences.

Question : Why did several generations of historians fail to discover the truth about the Taj Mahal which you have done?

That was because they allowed their gullibility to run away with their research faculties. They put implicit faith in traditional canards and stifled all doubts. They remained content with slipshod explanations for glaring discrepancies in such vital details as the cost of the Taj Mahal, its period of construction, its designer, lack of any claim in the Taj inscriptions about Shahjahan building it, and the silence regarding the dates of Mumtaz's death and her burial.

Question : What new evidence could you possibly adduce when so many great names in history had preceded you in research regarding the Taj Mahal?

My predecessors in historical research had gone about their task in a very lackadaisical manner. They proved very complacent. They failed to raise pertinent doubts and find a cogent answer to each. I claim to have brought forth no special evidence. My role has been like that of a police inspector who receives an anonymous report about a crime and then reaches the spot to investigate carrying with him only a pencil and a blank notebook. The evidence is found in the episode under investigation itself. It is not carried by the investigating policeman from his home, in his pocket. Similarly, when Mumtaz had died about 286 years before my birth and all that had to be said about the Taj Mahal had been recorded in universities and archives from Agra to Timbuktoo what new evidence could I produce? (I say I was born 'about' 286 years after Mumtaz's death, because while the date of my birth is accurately recorded at various places the date of Mumtaz's death is unknown to history

even though she has been tom-tommed as the dead heroine of a stony Taj Mahal. My task in fact involved only collecting the evidence, arranging it, analysing it and arguing out my case, asking the readers themselves as judges whether the evidence on record warrants the conclusion that Shahjahan commissioned the Taj Mahal or only commandeered it. But I must point out that in my review and re-examination of all the evidence I found that quite a few very important clues had been very cleverly glossed over and suppressed or foolishly and carelessly neglected. For instance Tavernier's noting about the Taj Mahal had been only haphazardly quoted and completely misunderstood all these years. The Badshahnama admission had either been suppressed or forgotten. An elderly scholar who had read the Badshahnama twice or thrice frankly and voluntarily confessed to me that he had all along failed to notice that on page 403 of Vol. I, Shahjahan's own Badshahnama (court chronicle) admits the Taj Mahal to be a commandeerd Hindu building. Unfortunately I met many Muslims claiming to be historians who when confronted with that passage tried to foist some bizarre interpretation on it. That illustrates how some elements in India whose academic eyes have a communal squint look upon history not as a sacred record of the truth about past happenings but as a crooked implement to twist facts to suit their own vagaries, inclinations and predilections. I met a large body constituting the top brass of history, at the Mysore session of the Indian History Congress (in December 1966) to whom I distributed a four-line printed extract from the Badshahnama admitting that the Taj was a Hindu mansion. Their reaction was surprising and saddening. They just blinked without saying even a word in appreciation or by way of rejection. To me it appeared they had an additional reason to keep discreetly silent. They sported big reputations as heads of an institution or of a history department. Admitting that the Taj was in fact a commandeered Hindu mansion contrary to what they had taught and believed all their working lives was inconvenient and embarrassing. That incident convinced me that the general run of people, no matter how highly educated and placed, prefer to stick to traditional lies than come out on the side of truth if admisson of the truth is likely to cause them the least bit of inconvenience in income and reputation. To them teaching

or propagating the historical truth was no consideration. What really mattered to them was only their ego, humdrum, mundane convenience, filthy lucre and hollow prestige.

Question : Though the Badshahnama admits that a Hindu mansion was commandeered for Mumtaz's burial do not a couple of lines towards the end refer to the summoning of geometricians and laying the foundations of a building?

Separating the truth subtly adulterated with a lot of falsehood tests the mettle of the real researcher. In the Badshahnama passage it may be noted that the entire narration about commandeering a building and burial of Mumtaz in it has been disposed off in half-a-dozen lines. This is one significant point which should impress upon the true researcher that the much vaunted construction of a fabulous Taj Mahal is a myth. The other point to be noted is that the passage first refers to the burial and then talks about summoning not masons but geometricians. They were needed to design different sizes of Koranic lettering on the walls of the usurped Hindu mansion at different heights. Geometricians were also needed to dig a central trench in the octagonal chamber on the ground floor and a similar burial trench in the room in the basement. Another point to be noted is that a very large number of mediaeval Muslim chroniclers make use of some pet phrases of which "laid the foundation" is one. Thereby they vaguely but shamelessly ascribe a usurped Hindu building to their own alien Muslim patrons. They skilfully avoid a direct assertion as a sop to their own conscience and as an escape valve lest some of their own contemporaries point out the fraud in claiming authorship of others' buildings for their own patrons. Historians must know that contemporary Muslim chroniclers deftly avoid making any explicit claims about any sultan or any courtier building anything. They only use such slippery phraseology as "laying the foundation." Therefore that phrase used by the Badshanama must be understood to stake a fraudulent, misleading claim because the chronicler wanted to gloss over the fact and hoodwink his readers about his royal patron Shahjahan burying Mumtaz in a second-hand mansion of the much-detested infidel Hindus. In this matter my predecessors in historical research the world over have proved very gullible. They have failed to size-up the misleading implication of this oft-repeated and misused phrase

"laid the foundation" used ad-nauseam by chronicler after Muslim chronicler. Moreover digging a trench to bury a corpse could be fraudulently justified as "digging the foundation." Had their alien Muslim patrons really built any tomb, mosque, fort, canal or bridge would not the contemporary chronicler have appended the relevant blue-prints, account sheets or copies of court orders and such other documents? Would he also not have written a whole book on the construction of a fort or founding of a city instead of dismissing the project in half-a-dozen lines!

Question : Don't you believe that Shahjahan's love for Mumtaz was inducement enough for him to commission the Taj Mahal?

This question calls for many answers. It is not a question of my belief or your belief. History must have evidence for every claim. The claim that Shahjahan had an infatuation for Mumtaz is itself phoney. From whatever history you may have read you will recall that if history ever makes any mention of any Mogul having a special attachment for his wife it is only with regard to Jahangir for Nurjahan. Those who claim that Shahjahan had any special out-of-the-world love for Mumtaz must point out repeated references to Shahjahan neglecting affairs of state and keeping closeted with Mumtaz. In that case history would have alluded to a guard posted outside the amour-chamber or a board hung declaring something like "Emperor locked in the embrace of the Empress,... Very busy... Sorry... Don't disturb." Since there is no such evidence nor is there any book of the love-stories of Shahjahan-Mumtaz like that of Romeo and Juliet or Laila-Majnu, it is wrong to believe in any special Shahjahan-Mumtaz love. It must also be realized that man's love for a woman is an incapacitating, debilitating emotion. Sexual love, the love of the flesh, infatuation for a woman never infuses one with any special vigour. Only higher emotions like love for God or for one's own country or for one's own mother or son inspires one to perform great deeds. Sexual craving for a woman only goads one to crime, if at all, like rape, suicide and murder. It is absurd to talk of the Taj Mahal as having been born out of the love of Shahjahan and Mumtaz because the only two things born out of man-woman love are a boy or a girl, never a building. You may verify this from your observation.

Question : Who do you think is responsible for creating the monstrous myth of the Shahjahan legend of the Taj Mahal ?

The responsibility for building up the monstrous myth out of nothing must be shared equally by medieval Muslim chroniclers-cum-court flatterers, by research scholars guilty of gross professional neglect and incompetence in putting blind faith in mere hearsay without caring to ask for convincing proof, by careless and gullible news reporters, fiction-writers and by versifiers, who in their flights of poetic frenzy let their imagination run wild over sexual love, failing to check up on historical data.

Question : Will not a Hindu claim to the Taj Mahal disrupt Hindu-Muslim relations ?

Truth is neither Hindu nor Muslim. Since we insist on children inculcating the habit of telling the truth should not the same rule apply to adults ! Amity based on falsehood is illusory and unstable no matter what the proximate consequences are.

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CHAPTER XXX

A PICTORIAL ANALYSIS

The garden pavilion of an Hindu mansion in Burhanpur (about 600 miles south west of Agra) where Mumtaz was buried in 1631 A. D. after her death in her 14th delivery during 18 years of married life.

Shahjahan-Mumtaz had encamped in the adjoining Hindu palace (not seen in the picture) during a north-south journey when Mumtaz died.

Muslim sources admit that Mumtaz lay buried in the above pavilion for six months after her death. For all one knows she may still lie buried there. Because the pavilion bears no trace of any digging to exhume the body.

Moreover if Shahjahan had really intended to raise a wonder - mausoleum he should have raised it over the burial spot in Burhanpur especially because it is highly sacrilegious to tamper

with a queen's body once buried.

It could be that only a fake funeral procession with a sealed coffin (supposed to contain Mumtaz's body) was stage-managed to enter Agra to exert 'deadly' regal, Mogul pressure to post-haste capture and confiscate the Jaipur ruler's bejewelled royal Tejomahalaya temple-palace complex in Agra on the specious pretext of Mumtaz's re-burial there and turn the sacred royal Hindu Tejomahalaya temple-palace complex into a bare, grim Islamic graveyard.

The ground-plan of the orthdox Vedic octagonal Tejomahalaya shrine in Agra where Mumtaz's exhumed body is supposed to have been interred again. Why this sacrilege ?

An aerial view. The white marble Tejomahalaya framed by four towers at its plinth-corners on the south bank of the sacred Yamuna river. Two identical red-stone buildings (each with three marble domes) facing the marble edifice from the east and west were meant to be reception pavilions for royal or religious congregations. The central marble building and the flanking red-stone buildings are all seven storied with octagonal features, which is a Vedic speciality. Seven-storied octagonal buildings are mentioned even in Ramayanic descriptions of Ayodhya.

In the red-stone forecourt of the marble edifice (abutting on the garden) visitors are made to remove their shoes before climbing up the marble platform precisely because that has been the tradition from the time that it had been a Shiva temple. Had the edifice originated as an Islamic cemetery shoes would have been allowed inside. Shoes are never removed in mere burial grounds. Note the trident designs at the two

corners of the entrance arch.

This is the main central marble edifice (a world attraction), the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Shiva's Tejoling emblem. Tejoling signifies the emblem radiating divine light. This is a seven-storied structure with four or five stories in marble and the rest underneath in red-stone which can be observed from the rear river-bank. This garden level is two stories above the river level. To reach the river stream one has to go out of the peripheral wall by the eastern gate and turn left in the northern direction along a gradient. There, standing on the sandy river bank one sees the towering two-stories-high red stone wall with arches all along its length whose ventilators have been crudely walled up by Shahjahan from inside.

A meticulous count will reveal 33 arches in the marble plinth seen infront in between the two towers on the left and the right.

Since the marble platform is a square the breadth too has 33 arches. Consequently the marble plinth itself encloses 33 x 33 [illegible] arches.

[illegible] rooms. That is the ground floor. Above it on either side of the lofty entrance-arch may be seen vaulted arches on two levels one above the other which constitute two more stories in marble.

Above them is the terrace at the base of the dome with four octagonal cupolas at four corners. This terrace may be counted as the 4th floor in marble. Or the nearly 83ft.-high hall enclosed by the dome may be regarded as the fourth storey. The entrance to it is from the rear of the dome.

The concave dome which one sees when standing near Mumtaz's cenotaph inside is enclosed by the dome outside seen in the above photo. Therefore most of the space inside that outer marble dome is taken up by the inner dome leaving only a footstep-wide narrow track sandwiched between the inner dome and the outer dome, along which one may perambulate the inner dome.

Since there are two solid domes one inside another with a lot of space separating their tops the story that a solitary tear which Shahjahan's ghost sheds from the top of this outer dome on every full-moon night at the stroke of midnight drips on Mumtaz's cenotaph down below, is a sheer erotic, romantic nonsensical canard floated by partisan rumour-mongers intended to benumb the logical faculties of sentimental visitors.

As per Vedic tradition water drops keep dripping from a pitcher hung above a Shivlinga. It is the memory of that drip which has been deftly hitched to the deceptive Shahjahan legend. Shahjahan was no saint or miracle-man to make his ghost weep over Mumtaz's cenotaph eternally at specified hours.

The outer western gateway leading to the spacious parking area for visitors' vehicles, lined by arcaded red-stone verandahs with rooms for shopkeepers selling their wares. The entire parking area is lined by such shopping arcades which Tavernier describes as a bazar of six courts.

Tavernier, a casual French jeweller-visitor mistook the term Tas-i-Makan alias Tejomahalaya to be this bazar of 'six courts' and therefore he says that ''Shahjahan purposely buried

Mumtaz 'near' the Tas-i-makan which foreigners used to visit, so that the world may admire.'' Tavernier's deduction is mistaken. It was Shahjahan's lust for wealth which made him use Mumtaz's death as an excuse to grab, rob and desecrate the Hindu temple-palace.

This western gateway has assumed importance in modern times because the main bus depot and railway station of the populous, bustling Agra city lies in that direction. In olden days it was the elevated gateway at the left (not seen in the picture) which used, to be the main entrance of the Tejganj alias Tajganj township. A narrow street of that township runs straight from the south across the parking area into the lofty entrance to the garden and the marble Tejomahalaya shrine. Though that shrine has now become a world-attraction it was basically intended to be a sacred shrine of the people of the Tejganj township as judged from the common defensive wall which encloses both that township and the Hindu Tejomahalaya shrine. That common defensive wall of the Hindu township and the Hindu shrine, is yet another indication that the Taj Mahal did not originate as a royal Mogul graveyard. Had it been built as a royal Muslim cemetery it would have been severely detached from the Hindu township. Moreover none lavishes fabulous

wealth and labour on the corpse of a woman-member of a teeming harem where deaths are a common, frequent occurrence.

This is the eastern entrance to the Tejomahalaya parking forecourt where in ancient times royal Hindu elephants used to sway. The east-west-highway runs right through the eastern and western gateways past the shopping arcades alongside the lofty entrance to the Tajmahal garden. The rectangular majestic parking forecourt with stately red-stone gateways in the four cardinal directions deserve world admiration for its perfect ancient Vedic lovely architectural town and landscape planning. Passing out through this eastern gateway if one turns left to proceed to the river bank along a gradient one sees a tall opening into a quadrangle being still used as a cowshed of that temple since ancient times. It is still known as Gaushala.

The elevated gateway leading out into the main street of the adjoining Tejganj township. Shopping arcades, such

as those seen to the right and left of the gateway run around the entire spacious quadrangle with central gateways on all four sides.

While the gateways at the east and west are at ground level, this gateway and the one opposite (not seen in the picture) are elevated, indicating their importance because one leads to the township while the other (being multi-storied and lofty) leads into the garden of the holy-shrine.

The gate seen above bears the ancient holy name 'Shree Gate' which modern rustic pronunciation fancies to be Seedhi Gate.

Seen above is the inner-side gate and the Tejomahalaya forecourt. If one goes out through the gate into the Tejganj street and immediately turns about to gaze at the gateway arch apex from the Tejganj side, one can see the gaping hole of an empty broken niche because the idol of Lord Ganesh which had been enshrined

there as per Vedic custom, has been uprooted and destroyed after Shahjahan took hold of the premises.

The Tejomahalaya shopping arcade has had at its outer eastern and western corners, flanking the Shree gate, two other

subsidiary sentinel-temples. This octagonal pavilion with a white dome in the south west corner bearing the inverted lotus cap and straight Vedic pinnacle pitcher shaft, is one of them. But alas, since Shahjahan's time the sacred sanctum has an Islamic cenotaph attributed to an harem-maid Satunnisa Khanam. But since no name is inscribed on it that seems to be an inspired canard explaining away the desecration of the Hindu shrine.

The corresponding Hindu, divine sentinel shrine in the south—eastern corner of the shopping arcade flanking the Tejganj gate has since Shahjahan's time been desecrated and advertised as Sarhandi Begum's shrine. That is mere hearsay since the cenotaph bears no name. That is a ruse to somehow explain away the desecration of a temple.

Another intriguing detail is that Sarhandi Begum (one of Shahjahan's royal wives) has a cenotaph identical in build and grandeur to that of Satunnisa Khanam, a mere maid. Such comparative incongruities abounding in the Shahjahan legend have escaped the attention of modern scholars which is a major fault of their research faculties. They are all prone to admit traditional chauvinistic Muslim canards at their face value without making the least effort to cross-check and cross-question the details.

The lofty multi-storied entrance gate where visitors buy entry tickets. The Goverment archaeology department has a small office behind the booking window. The officer in charge has the keys to the locked seven-storied complex. Visitors paying the governmental levy to enter the Taj Mahal premises do not get their money's worth because they are allowed entry only to an infinitesimal portion of the sprawling complex.

On top of the lofty gateway is a row of eleven white spiked kalashas (pitchers) representing 11 Rudras i.e. manifestations of Lord Shiva.

The interior of the multi-storied vaulted entrance-gate leading first to the rectangular garden and then to the wonder marble edifice at the far end.

The temple-palace management staff used to work on both floors on various assigned duties.

The carved decorative red stone bunting around the interior and exterior of this gateway, about knee-high from the floor, if minutely observed turns out to be an ingenious running chain of three-in-one Ganesh images, two in profile on the flanks and one with a frontal facing in the middle.

A panoramic view of the Tejo Mahalya temple-palace complex. On either side of the central marble water tank at the far left and the far right flank are two Nagar khanas (drum and music pavilions) not shown in the picture below.

On either flank of the marble edifice are two identical buildings. The one on the left seen above the trees is the so-called mosque, while the one on the right beyond the trees is the so-called jawab. Before misappropriation by Shahjahan both these were reception pavilions of the Tejo-Mahalaya Vedic temple palace complex.

A frontal view of the octagonal marble Tejomahalaya temple-palace. The steps from the garden lead to the red stone pavement where people are seen standing. The seven arches in the central portion (above the red stone steps) enclose two sets of stairs to climb up to the marble platform one from the right and the other from the left.

As soon as one climbs up the steps on to the marble plinth, a step or two ahead is a largish square marble slab. Stamp your foot on it. You will hear a hollow sound. That

indicates that the slab hides the stairs leading to the hundreds of rooms inside the marble platform. Since the Tajmahal is a symmetrical building similar slabs at identical spots on the other three sides may also have stairs hidden inside them to descend

to the chambers below. As per our estimate the marble platform consists of 33 x 33 = 1089 chambers as judged from the 33 arches seen along the length as well as the equal breadth.

A few feet ahead of the slab on which you stamped your foot, as you face the vaulted marble entrance arch, you will notice two parallel rows of inferior reddish stoneslabs. That is because the uprooted Nandi (the celestial bull) associated with Lord Shiva, was posited there facing the main entrance arch leading to the sanctum where Mumtaz's cenotaph now covers the Shivling or the spot of the Shivling. That Nandi having been uprooted the spot was paved with inferior stone.

Two symmetrical staircases leading to the upper floors are located inside the small doorways seen in the arches on the right and left of the main lofty arch. To reach them one has to enter the doorway seen in the centre of the main lofty vaulted arch and then turn left or right. But the doorways are kept unjustifiably locked by the Archaeological Survey of India denying access to ordinary visitors and serious students to the upper stories.

The upper chambers have been stripped of all marble covering the floor and the walls by Shahjahan, while the ceiling is all darkened by the smoke of the fires lighted by Shahjahan's Mogul troopers camping there to uproot the silver doors, gold railing and other costly gold and silver fixtures.

The marble Taj Mahal has identical vaulted lofty archways in all the four directions. Their temple decor was chiselled away and Koranic extracts were improvised to fill the cavities. Shown above is the western archway. Take a close look at the marble

stone frames around the vertical and horizontal Koranic passages to notice the patches of dissimilar shapes and tints of marble used!

This is the Eastern arch. Notice the dark broken piece at the base (left) and two circular dark patches at the column base far right and the black square patches on the vertical marble strip at the left. All the marble frames enclosing Koranic extracts throughout the Taj Mahal are an improvised patchwork for profane misuse as gap-fillings.

Patches galore are clearly visible in this south side entrance to the octagonal central sanctum. Notice the vertical marble slab by the side of the arch on the left. Its lower part is grey ending in a white square piece, above which is a dark strip.

Also notice the rectangular horizontal ventilator above the arch. It has been haphazardly sealed by patches of stone of varying sizes and shades.

The west archway above also betrays similar patched coverups along the Koranic fillings.

This north arch too has the same tale to tell. See the vertical patch line in the rectangular ventilator above the arch and the top marble strip.

The Koranic cover-up patchwork on top of the trident tufted entrance arch.

Cobras lined up above a string of inlaid temple bells pattern form the upper border of the Taj Mahal. Both cobras and bells have sacred associations in Vedic spiritual lore.

A magnified view of cobra pairs.

The gateway at which entry tickets are issued, is decorated both inside and out, at the knee-level with a bunting depicting such ingeneous three-in-one Ganesh caricatures; two in profile on the flanks enclosing a frontal one in the middle.

The arches in the marble plinth and the rectangular ventilator above each one of them, (allowing light and air to the 1089 chambers inside the plinth) may be minutely observed to have been sealed with marble slabs.

The seven arches at the bottom of the next page enclose the stairs which lead to the top of the marble plinth symmetrically from the right and left.

The Nandi (Lord Shiva's bull) occupied the spot where the person clad in white robes is seen standing facing the entrance, before it was uprooted at Shahjahan's orders. That spot was patched up later with inferior reddish slabs.

Note the trident shaped designs in inlay filigree at the two upper corners of the entrance and the trident-shaped red lotus bud at the apex of the arch.

The Koranic stones fixed vertically and horizontally along such lofty arches on all four sides were improvised to fill up gaping cavities left after digging out idols of Vedic deities and Sanskrit extracts.

We arrive at the above conclusion because (1) a close inspection of the marble frames enclosing the Koranic extracts

reveal patches of marble of different shapes and tints (2) the Koranic extracts are random, haphazard out-of-sequence and incomplete (3) On hot days with the visitor's feet burning on the marble plinth, a fierce sun beating down on the head and the eyes burning with intense sunlight radiated by the white marble sheen even a devout Muslim knowing Arabic won't have the heart or even the steady head or patience to crane and strain his eyes and neck alternately vertically and horizontally to make any head or tail of that message of Allah.

Above the horizontal Koranic line is an inlaid row of temple bell designs. Above that is the row of cobras with hoods raised facing one another.

These arches along the eastern side of the plinth are an indication of the row upon row of rooms (total 1089) that lie hidden inside the marble plinth. Closely scrutinize how the arches and the rectangular ventilators above have been sealed with marble slabs of different sizes and tints.

A close-up of the upper part of a minaret. The galleries rest on snake-shape brackets which is a distinct Hindu architectural trait. The minarets served as watch towers during the day and light towers at night.

A specimen close-up of the octagonal base of the marble minarets. The arches indicate that there are chambers inside. The arches and the rectangular ventilators above have been closed with marble slabs whose horizontal lines and patches of varying tints are showing.

Mumtaz's tomb in the crypt (basement). Notice the pavement patched up with marble slabs of varying sizes and tints indicating that the Shivling here has either been replaced by the cenotaph or is covered up by it.

Shahjahan's cenotaph and Mumtaz's cenotaph (at right) in the crypt. Notice that the marble base of Mumtaz's cenotaph is just plain, its lower part too is plain (though she has been tom-tommed as the heroine of the Taj Mahal show) while that of Shahjahan has filigree decoration all over. That slip is an indication of the hurried burial drama cooked up to rob Raja Jaisingh of his fabulous temple-palace.

After one enters the lofty arch from the marble platform one steps into spacious halls which form a perambulatory passage all around the central octagonal sanctum. That sanctum too has entrances on all four sides. But only the south entrance seen in the picture has been kept open since Shahjahan's time.

All these outer and inner entrances had silver doors which are common to all renowned Hindu (Vedic) shrines. Those were uprooted and ranged on the outer marble plinth before being spirited away to Shahjahan's Mogul treasury.

European visitors to the shrine around 1631 A. D. noticing the uprooted costly fixtures such as silver doors ranged on the marble platform misunderstood them to have been ordered by Shahjahan to be used in the building.

Contrarily the thousands of labourers rounded up from the by-lanes of Agra city under threats of dire consequences were forced to toil gratis to uproot all the costly fixtures such as the gem-studded gold railing (around the Shivling), silver doors, precious stones stuffed in the marble lattices and the golden pitcher dripping water on the Shivlinga, and transport them to the Mogul treasury.

It was this plunder-motive which made unscrupulous, cruel haughty and stingy Shahjahan make use of Mumtaz's interred body to be used as a mere pawn in his crafty plot to instantaneously dispossess the Maharaja of Jaipur of his fabulous temple-palace in the Mogul capital by confronting him with a trumped-up, dire, deadly, imperious, Islamic ultimatum.

Notice the framed decorative panels to the left and right of the doorway. They depict embossed Om-shaped Dhatura flowers and conchshell-type foliage. The panel at the left has the sacred conchshell design depicted below.

The right-side panel depicts a plant with flowers shaped like the sacred Vedic chant (Om) ॐ

Mumtaz's cenotaph in the foreground and subsequent Shahjahan's cenotaph beside it in the upper marble octagonal chamber. Notice that both the cenotaphs are highly decorated with inlay work.

Neither Shahjahan nor Mumtaz could have been buried here because this chamber is on the 4th floor above the river surface. Corpses are invariably buried in mother-earth and never on stone floors. Consequently this so-called Mumtaz's cenotaph in this central octagonal chamber either covers the sacred Hindu (Vedic) Shivling itself or the sacred spot from which the Shivling was uprooted.

Mumtaz's so-called cenotaph, and Shahjahan's fancied cenotaph beside it, in the basement chamber below the octagonal upper chamber. Notice the base slab of Mumtaz's cenotaph. It is plain white though the rest of the cenotaph and Shahjahan's cenotaph alongside and the two cenotaphs on the upper chmber are all decorated with profuse inlay work. The incongruous plain white marble base slab of Mumtaz's cenotaph in this nether chamber is a tell-tale sign of the faked burial in Agra. Even the basement cenotaphs have two red-stone stories beneath them reaching the river level. Therefore even the cenotaphs in the basement seem to be fakes. The basement Shivling appears to have been covered by Mumtaz's fake cenotaph as in the upper chamber. Even otherwise why should there be two cenotaphs each for Shahjahan and Mumtaz on two floors? That means that at least one cenotaph each of

Shahjahan and Mumtaz must be fake. Why should there be even one pair of fake cenotaphs? And since one pair of cenotaphs is fake the crucial question is which is the fake one. The one in the lower or upper chamber? Or does each floor contain one fake and the genuine cenotaph alternating between Shahjahan and Mumtaz?

It is a pity that world scholars boasting of high academic reputations in history, architecture, archaeology, museology and forensic science have been so somnolent for the last 350 and odd years as to allow the preposterous Shahjahan-Mumtaz legend, stained with carnal love, to pass muster in spite of being riddled with a myriad loopholes disclosed and discussed in the half-a-dozen editions of this book during the last 28 years?

Visitors would do well to stand still near Mumtaz's cenotaph inside the marble lattice for a few moments until the dazzle of the hot sun outside vanishes from their eyes. Then they may look up at the dark concave domed ceiling centre from where hangs the chain which held the golden water pitcher dripping water on the Shivling below (now replaced by Mumtaz's cenotaph).

Around the hook (from which hangs the chain) is a sketch in concentric circles. In the smallest innermost circle are arrows symbolizing the eight surface directions. Around it is another circle of 16 serpents looking down on the Shivling underneath. Around it is a wider circle of 32 tridents. Surrounding it is a bigger circle depicting 64 lotus buds. Even this mathematical progression of multiples of 8 i.e. 8 x 2 = 16 x 2 = 32 x 2 = 64 is of esoteric Vedic significance and has no relation with Islam. The preponderating significance of 8 in Vedic

tradition may be judged from terms such as Ashtapadis, Ashtavadhani, Ashtaputra, Ashtadhatu, Ashtang Ayurved, Mangalashtak and Sastang namaskar. An enlarged photo of the concentric circles depicting the octal Vedic progression appears below

The octagonal lattice around the cenotaph of Mumtaz (which has replaced or covered the sacred Shivling) has in its upper border a total of 108 pitchers, some rotund and striped (seen to the left) and some oblong like vases. The rotund striped pitcher is seen bathing the Shivaling underneath with a stream of milk. The decorative flora on the vase and other parts of the Tajmahal alias Tejomahalaya is all native to India. Such decoration in the orange, Vedic colour behoves a Hindu temple or palace but never a sombre Islamic sepulchre.

The upper border of the octagonal marble lattice displays rows of pitchers. The pillars marking specific divisions are surmounted by solitary pitchers. Count from the far left end pillar mounted with one pitcher. That is followed by a row of 11 pitchers. Thereafter is a pillar surmounted by a solitary pitcher. The next division has three pitchers. Those are followed by the entrance arch having single pitchers on its two pillars and three pitchers in between. Such a count all along the lattice top, adds up to 108 pitchers which figure has a sacred Vedic spiritual significance.

Surrounding the central octagonal sanctum are such spacious halls (with the floor and lower part of the walls paved with marble) forming the perambulatory passage with apertures in the remote centre affording a view of the central deity throughout the perambulation, as per Vedic custom. The archways at the left and right may be seen to have been sealed at Shahjahan's orders.

The octagonal lattice enclosure of the sacred Shivling used to be stuffed with precious stones, gems and jewels. The Shivling has been replaced by Mumtaz's cenotaph. The chain hanging from the centre of the concave domed ceiling used to hold the golden pitcher dripping water on the Shivling. A gem-studded gold railing rated at Rs. 600,000/- in 1631 A. D. stood around the Shivling. The ancient legendary Hindu peacock throne is also surmised to have been in this Tejomahalaya temple-palace. It was the lure of such fabulous wealth which impelled Shahjahan to hastily occupy and rob the Tejo Mahalaya temple-palace

complex which Raja Jaisingh of Jaipur (250 miles away), a vassal of the Moguls, owned (by succession) in the Mogul capital Agra.

Shahjahan was the first Mogul emperor to murder all his rivals to grab the throne. Consequently when Shahjahan came to the throne in 1628 his treasury was empty. He was therefore on the lookout for ways and means to enrich his treasury. The death of his wife Mumtaz provided that opportunity in 1631. On the pretext of the Tejomahalaya temple-palace complex being the most suitable site

for Mumtaz's burial Shahjahan ordered his troops to occupy the premises, transport its wealth and costly fittings to the Mogul treasury and raise cenotaphs inside. That was fulfilling three Moghul objectives in one move. The objectives were (1) Robbery (2) Weakening the Rajput Maharaja through impoverishment (3) Defiling an Hindu centre of worship out of iconoclastic Islamic frenzy.

Readers may take a close look at the marble patchwork frames around the Koranic extracts (below the top ventilator) indicating how the ancient Tejomahalaya temple-palace complex has been extensively tampered with.

A close-up of the gilded pinnacle rising from the inverted lotus cap of the marble dome. The pinnacle is known as Kalash in Vedic parlance because of the stack of pitchers which constitute it.

The curvy shaft seen in the upper portion represents the crescent on Lord Shiva's forehead. Above it is an oblong pitcher, two mango-leaves curving on either side with a coconut balanced on top. Such a coconut-topped pitcher represents divinity in Vedic tradition.

An exact replica of the pinnacle is inlaid in bluish stone-chips in the redstone courtyard on the eastern side at the foot of the building currently dubbed as Jawab.

The replica is said to measure about 31ft. and 6-3/4 inches giving one an idea of the exact height of the metal pinnacle on the dome.

The floor replica of the pinnacle has no lettering on it. But the uppermost oblong-pitcher on the pinnacle-shaft if minutely observed reveals some Islamic lettering embossed on it.

The first British archaeological chief in India was Sir Alexander Cunningham (whose declared aim was to use archaeology as a tool to convert all Indians to Christianity and perpetuate British rule over India) He had retired from the army engineering corps. It is surmised that he sent some British soldiers to the top over a scaffolding, equipped with a flame-thrower-stove to soften the curvy pitcher surface with red-heat and press a stencil into it to imprint the Islamic slogan Alla-ho-akabar. But it is said that the persons who carried out that metallic forgery have also stealthily stencilled their own names 'Taylor' etc. underneath or on the other side of the bulging pitcher. I could never make it to the top of the dome (from lack of adequate facilities to climb that high). Yet I suggest that researchers and bureaucrats who value the truth and are resourceful enough to muster the necessary climbing facilities investigate the suspected fraud and forgery mentioned above.

The full-scale replica of the pinnacle on the dome is inlaid in blue chips in the red-stone courtyard on the eastern side at the foot of the so-called seven-storied Jawab building. The pinnacle topped with a coconut displayed in the eastern pavement has a Vedic significance.

This is a corner of the terrace from which the large white dome rises in the background. Only the lower portion of the large dome girdled with the Hindu lotus petal design is seen.

Cobras form the entire upper border of the octagonal Taj marble edifice with identical lofty entrance arches in all the four cardinal directions. That is a Vedic trait. The cobras too are associated with Lord Shiva.

The red stone flight of steps on the terrace leading to the white (closed) door to enter the hollow dome may be carefully observed (beyond the cupola and the gateway spire) on the right-hand-side. As one enters that doorway one has to traverse 13 feet distance before reaching the lofty hall inside. That proves that the dome is made up of 13 ft.-thick masonry. Therefore the story that the angry hammer stroke of a disgruntled mason made such an accurate tiny hole as to allow just one drop of a dead Shahjahan's tear to ooze on Mumtaz's cenotaph only on moonlit nights is a typical specimen of the fraudulent details that make up the concocted Shahjahan-Mumtaz legend of the Taj Mahal.

Note the upper part of the marble frame of the arch. The left side marble is blacker than its counterpart on the right. Also closely observe the niches on the right and left. The Vedic idols in them were chiselled away and niches were patched up

with broken bits of marble. Readers are advised to scan the surface of the niches and door frames with a magnifying glass or with close attention to realize the colossal Islamic desecration, scraping and manhandling of the entire Tejomahalaya temple-palace edifice. Also observe the rectangular ventilator frame above the archway. The right flank oblong stone is a black-tint patch.

Observe the two arched niches. The arches embodying semi-circular folds are a Hindu architectural speciality. The hybrid term 'Indo-Islamic architecture' was forged by baffled Western scholars who mistook captured and manhandled Hindu buildings to be Muslim. For instance readers may closely observe the horizontal

slab line below the arches of the two niches. They betray patchwork dabbling. Also notice the horizontal narrow marble strip at the top of the picture consisting of pieces of marble of different tints and sizes crudely patched up.

This is the left side of the west arch. Notice the broken design patch at the left and the cracked niche panel at right. The left-hand lower frame has an imperfect diagonal black line running down the middle which shows that a random slab has been haphazardly used to cover up some Hindu details.

A riverside rear view. The octagonal tower on the right is part of the seven-storied building which is being used and advertised as a mosque from 1631 A. D. The identical tower at the far left is part of the so-called Jawab. Connecting them both is the red stone wall. In that wall is a clear horizontal dividing line. The lower portion is the plinth. The upper portion has 22 rooms in the space below the two marble towers. The open space on either side of the marble towers on the red stone walls is a terrace paved with red stones, forming the base of the marble structure.

There are two doorways in the plinth (not seen in this picture) close to the two towers. The plinth and the row of arches (faintly visible) above the plinth-line represent two stories in red stone. Below the plinth there is probably a subterranean storey. That plus the two stories in red stone and the four stories in marble together make the seven stories of the central edifice mentioned in prince Aurangzeb's letter to his father emperor Shahjahan. Likewise the two flanking red-stone buildings on the east and west (of which only the two corner towers are seen in the above picture) are referred to as the mosque and Jawab from the time of the abrupt confiscation of the whole Hindu estate by Shahjahan in 1631 A. D.

The three domes of the so-called mosque are a misfit in Islam. Since Islam has only one Allah and one prophet for whom is the third dome? Moreover the qibla (i.e. the prayer niche) is not aligned to the Kaba in Mecca as it should be in a genuine mosque. Also when there are three qiblas instead of one they couldn't all be aligned to the Kaba at the same time. And since the twin building on the eastern flank is a non-mosque it automatically follows that its identical counterpart to the west is also a non-mosque. Only buildings with the same function and purpose can have an identical design.

This is a frontal view of the so-called mosque facing the marble Tejomahalaya from the west. At the right rear corner may be seen an octagonal seven - storied red-stone, marble - top tower reaching down to the river bank. Six stories of this are above ground and one below the river level. Likewise, the marble Taj Mahal too has one red stone basement under the ground, two stories in red stone from the river-level upwards and four stories in marble.

This so-called mosque too is seven storied. The portion seen in the picture is three-storied. The three archways represent one storey. The sealed ventilators above the arches at the right and left mark the upper storey, while the three domes on the terrace form the topmost storey. There are three more stories underneath reaching down to the river level and one subterranean basement, making in all seven.

There is an identical seven-storied red stone marble-top, twin-building facing the marble Taj Mahal from the east. While the edifice seen in the above picture is advertised as a mosque because it stands on the west flank its twin on the eastern flank is justified by Islamic bluffs as a 'Jawab' i.e. a counterpoise. Intelligent visitors must not be taken in by such canards. Firstly a genuine mosque is never a seven-storied building. Secondly it will never be in the Vedic ochre-colour stone. Thirdly if the edifice on the eastern flank is a non-mosque its identical counterpart on the western flank too must be a non-mosque. Here it needs to be remembered that if two bildings are identical in size and shape their uses too must be identical. So if the building on the eastern flank is a non-mosque its counterpart on the

western side must also be a non-mosque. The qibla i.e. the central prayer arch of the above building is not aligned to Mecca as it should have been, had it been raised as a mosque. The muezzin's minaret too is missing. If the lone Muslim caretaker in the so-called mosque is talked into cooperation he lights a dim lantern and guides one through the dark corridors of the seven-storied edifice. Alternatively one may romp through the identical seven-storied building on the east. On the red-stone pavement at the foot of the eastern building is a full-scale replica of the gilded pinnacle shaft that stands rooted in the Taj Mahal high - dome. Therein one may clearly see that the design shows a metal pitcher (based on the midpoint of a curving shaft) with the sacred Vedic coconut placed on curving mango-tree leaves. That the pinnacle replica is displayed on the eastern flank is significant because of the importance of the East in Vedic life. The two flanking buildings were reception-pavilions of the temple-palace.

A close-up of the octagonal seven-storied red-stone tower reaching down to the river level at the northeast end of the Tejomahalaya complex.

The marble plinth has at its base a red-stone courtyard. At the four corners of that courtyard are such identical octagonal seven-storied pavilions, which along with the marble towers at the four corners of the marble plinth served as watch towers for sentries during the day and as lamp-towers during the night so that the populace could identify the Tejomahalaya temple-palace framed up in lights in dark nights.

The octagon has a special significance in Vedic tradition which holds that God and the sovereign hold sway in all ten directions. The octagon represents the eight surface directions while the pinnacle points to the heaven and the foundation to the nether world. Consequently octagonal patterns abound in Vedic (Hindu) temples and palaces.

The inverted lotus cap on top of the dome is also a Vedic speciality because in Vedic etiquette the hands, feet, eyes and face of respected and doted individuals are invariably referred to as lotus-hands, lotus-feet, lotus-eyes and lotus face. Personal names such as Kamal, Rajeev, Mrinal, Saroj are all synonyms of lotus.

Beyond the river stream may be seen a similar redstone tower which indicates that there used to be bathing ghats on either bank which were demolished at Shahjahan's orders. Boats also used to ply in those days across the river stream. Iron rings fixed in the redstone wall at the rear of the Tejomahalay were meant to tether the boats. The ruins on the other bank are remnants of Hindu structures which were razed by invading Muslims. But mercenary guides vying to impress gullible visitors in a hurry mislead the latter by bluffing that those constitute the foundation of a black marble mausoleum which Shahjahan intended for himself. Thus the Shahjahan legend serves as a merry bandwagon in which any number of such Muslim bluffs could be shoved by anybody indiscriminately. When even the white Taj Mahal isn't Shahjahan's creation he couldn't even dream of raising its black marble match!

A close-up of the southern wing of the so-called mosque. Note the trident designs inlaid at the two shoulders of the entrance arch and at the central apex.

Now take a close look at the white marble slabs stuffed to

seal and gag the square window above the entrance arch. Also notice a chipped off portion of the red-stone base of the window.

Such close inspection from top to bottom, inside and out, of every edifice forming the Tejo Mahalaya temple-palace complex will reveal how the gagging and sealing, blocking and barring of thousands of rooms and hundreds of ventilators, staircases and doorways, uprooting idols and burying them inside sealed chambers to disfigure and defile a world-famous specimen of glorious and superb Vedic architecture with the help of thousands of labourers toiling unpaid to the crack of whips was misunderstood by contemporary European visitors such as Tavernier, Bernier and Peter Mundy as construction of a mausoleum.

All that was a colossal misunderstanding and misrepresentation. When the casual, stray, foreigners, ignorant of the local language gestured to the local Muslim supervisors inquiring as to what was that furious 'building activity' for? they were informed that it was a mausoleum being readied for Mumtaz. That was technically, ironically and tragically true but factually it was vandalism accompanied by imperial Mogul robbery on a gigantic scale.

Note the pairs of cobra design on the red-stone panel at the base of the dome. What are the cobras there for if the building was a mosque ?

The edifice on the next page is even to this day known as Nagar Khana, literally meaning a drum house. Every prominent Hindu temple and palace has such pavilions where sacred, soft musical strains used to be played on the shehnai to the beat of drums at morning and evening Tejomahalay temple prayers and at royal congregations. Correspondingly music is taboo both in Muslim mosques and mausoleums. Moreover music and drum-beats are totally ruled out in burial grounds where the dead need peace as we are told. Therefore the Nagar Khana is yet another irrefutable indication of the temple-palace origin of Tejo Mahalaya alias Tajmahal

There is an exact twin of this Nagar Khana just opposite on the eastern border of the garden like this one on the western side. In between them in the centre of the rectangular garden is a marble cistern.

Such symmetrical planning is an hall-mark of Vedic architecture while Islamic constructions are all confused conglomerates of jumbled-up, pell-mell patterns.

The octagonal marble-top lotus-petalled cupola of the Nagar Khana and its ochre stone, matching the Hindu flag, is yet another distinguishing Vedic trait.

Though only three stories of this edifice are seen above the garden-level it could be that underneath there are four more stories reaching down through the massive defensive wall (of the entire complex) at the rear.

To the right about 50 yds. away is the so-called mosque. In between this Nagar Khana and the so-called mosque is what looks like an octagonal tower outwardly. But it in fact encloses a seven-storied well with circular stairways leading right upto the water level tallying with the nearby river-level.

On some of those stories are ancient scavenging-type latrines because the apartments in the seven stories served as a royal treasury. The treasure-chests used to be in the lowermost storey so that they could be pushed into the well for safety in case the premises had to be surrendered to a superior enemy. Cashiers occupied the lower stories while the higher officials squatted on the upper stories. The water in the well served as natural airconditioner with no mechanism (liable to breakdowns) involved. Such ingenious harnessing of nature to human needs requiring no maintenance staff, equipment or funds is a unique speciality of Vedic architecture.

Encyclopaedias and other reference books carelessly record that the Tajmahal complex consists of guest rooms, guard rooms, stables, shopping arcades and pleasure pavilions. All these are appurtenances of a Vedic shrine and not of premises cluttered with buried corpses. The picture above depicts a kitchen for pilgrims and picnickers by the side of what was an earlier sentinel temple but is now pointed out as Sarhandi Begum's tomb.

The corresponding tomb of Satunnisa Khanam has adjacent to it what is dubbed as Fatehpuri Begum's mosque seen below

All this shows how the lavish, extensive, ancient, sacred, Vedic, Hindu Tejomahalaya pilgrimage complex is being wildly, indiscriminately, loosely and wantonly explained away as mosques and tombs of nondescript harem women who had not even a decent roof over their heads during their life-times and whose names have been hardly ever mentioned in histories.

As one comes out of the eastern gate of the Taj parking quadrangle and turns left to proceed down the gradient to the river bank, on the left a tall gateway leads into the royal Hindu temple cowshed while a little further on the right is this ancient satellite temple being misused since 1631 A. D. as a nondescript mosque and tomb.

What we have shown above is only a random sample of the sculptural Islamic forgery abounding in the Tajmahal.

The Tajmahal complex is so vast and tall that it would need an army of technicians and scholars equipped with tall ladders to

minutely scan every nook, corner and wall from the crypts to pinnacles of all the seven-storied edifices including the seven-storied well. Hundreds of rooms, staircases and balconies sealed by Shahjahan will have to be opened up and pried into.

So-called tomb & mosque outside the east wall is infact part of ancient Tejomahalaya temple complex.

The four cenotaphs ought to be dug up and examined for the simple reason that Shahjahan and Mumtaz, just two individuals, couldn't have been buried in two cenotaphs each. That clearly shows that at least two of those four cenotaphs are fakes. Then the question that arises is which of those are fakes, the ones in the upper octagonal sanctum or in the basement chamber ? What is the purpose of those fake cenotaphs ? What are they hiding ? And how does one explain away Mumtaz's cenotaph in Burhanpur ?

That hundreds of Vedic idols must have been buried or walled up in the Tajmahal complex should be apparent from the analysis presented in this book. A corroboration was unexpectedly recently provided by an article published by a fortnightly titled India Times published from washington, D.C., U.S.A. on page 12 of the issue dated March 15, 1989. The title of the article, contributed by Mr. Arvind Ghosh of Houston, Texas, U.S.A. was Karbala in Fatehpur Sikri. In that he described how when in 1978 he visited the Taj

Mahal "I met an old gardener, a Muslim who worked in the garden of the Taj and he told me that once, while some repairs were going on inside the Taj he had occasion to get inside of one of the closed rooms. He saw with his own eyes scores of Hindu deities stacked on the four sides of the room. When the supervisor, a Hindu saw him there he was chided for having come inside the room without permission. The poor man, for fear of losing his job left forthwith but eversince, he has been dying to tell his story to people who would believe him. He said that he owed a lot to the ancient faith of the land where his ancestors were forced to accept Islam, by the sword. Aurangzeb was the ruler then."

The ghosts of Shahjahan, Mumtaz and a number of other Muslim men and women buried in the Tajmahal grounds seem to be pretty fierce and cruel so as to force Government of India bureaucrats and academicians flaunting high qualifications and positions around the world to desist from disclosing the Hindu origin of the Taj incessantly for the last 350 and odd years. This is a sad commentary on the frailty of human character. They would rather put up with falsity and fraud than disclose the truth and be damned.

Through the threadbare discussion of the Taj Mahal issue presented in this book our objective is to awaken and alert scholars and bureaucrats to the fact that historic edifices throughout the world advertised as Muslim are invariably captured property. Thus the so-called Cardova mosque and Alhambra in Spain, the Al Aqsa and Dome on the Rock in Jerusalem, the Shah-i-Zind and Tamerlane mausoleum in Russia, the Ghazni tower in Afghanistan and the numerous forts, palaces mosques, mausoleums and townships advertised as Muslim in India will be found to pre-date Islam if the present gullible and shoddy methods of namesake historical research are severely shunned.

Until I published my discovery in 1965 A. D. that the Taj Mahal is not a Muslim mausoleum but a captured and misused Hindu temple-palace called Tejo Mahalaya, for over 300 years visitors had been completely oblivious of the abounding holy Hindu features in the edifice such as the one shown on the next page. This illustrates the world of difference in viewing the Taj Mahal as a mausoleum or as a temple palace.

When one stands near Mumtaz's cenotaph (which has buried the ancient sacred Shivling) and looks up above, one sees inside

the concave domed ceiling the holy Hindu pattern shown below. A metal chain hangs down from the centre of the dome surrounded by shafts pointing to the eight Vedic directions. Around them is a cluster of 16 cobras, since Lord Shiv is always associated with them. In the circle around the cobras are 32 tridents, the special missile of Lord Shiv. The outer wider circle is made up of 64 lotus buds. All these concentric circles represent petals of the mystic Vedic lotus made up of multiples of eight.

The lofty red-stone gateway to the Taj garden where one buys entry tickets is decorated (at about the knee-level from the floor surface) by the above continuous decorative bunting both inside and out.

Peer at it carefully to realize that the entire bunting is made up of such cleverly wrought three-in-one Ganesh images (two in profile at the right and left with trunks raised and one frontal in the centre). Lord Ganesh is appropriately at the entrance and in Vedic saffron colour. If carefully counted they are likely to be in exact Vedic multiples of 8.

Burhanpur is a very ancient historic city on the Central Railway between Khandwa and Bhusawal junctions. The unkempt appearance of the building on the next page bears witness to Muslim unconcern for the upkeep of captured Hindu property. The domes robbed of their pinnacles is proof of our succinct conclusion that at all historic sites the construction is all Hindu and destruction all Muslim.

Burhanpur and the nearby Asirgarh (fort) used to provide

hospitality to Hindu royalty proceeding north or south on pilgrimage, weddings or military expeditions.

Burhanpur has many magnificent mansions which are currently being described as mosques and tombs of alien Islamic invaders, because of protracted Islamic occupation.

This building is one such ancient Hindu royal palace captured by the Moghuls. Mumtaz died here during her 14th delivery around 1631 A. D. while she and Shahjahan were camping here. She is said to be buried in a Hindu pavilion in front of this palace, shown in another picture earlier.

The corridors at the approach to the Taj Mahal are typically Hindu. They may be seen in any ancient Hindu capital. Note the two octagonal towers (cupolas) at the right and left top in the photo overleaf. Only Hindus have special names for the eight directions and celestial guards assigned to each. Any octagonal feature in historic buildings should convince the visitor of their Hindu origin. Guards, palanquin-bearers and other attendants resided in hundreds of rooms along numerous such corridors when the

Taj Mahal was a Hindu temple palace. Thus the Taj was more magnificent and majestic before it was reduced to a sombre Islamic cemetery.

The whole spacious quadrangle outside the lofty entrance to the Taj garden is lined by such stately shopping arcades which the French visitor, Tavernier describes as a bazar of six courts. All outstanding Hindu temples have such bazars around them.

Visitors standing on the marble platform of the Taj Mahal facing its lofty entrance arch should carefully study this design which adorns its top. The uppermost pattern is that of rows of cobras facing each other with hoods raised. Underneath them is an inlaid bunting of bells. Underneath them are koranic extracts inlaid in bits of marble of different hues and sizes to fill up gaps left after extracting Sanskrit inscriptions and Hindu decor.

The dome of the Taj Mahal bearing a trident pinnacle made of a non-rusting eight-metal Hindu alloy. The pinnacle served as a lightning deflector too.

This pinnacle has been blindly assumed by many to be an Islamic crescent and star or a lightning conductor installed by the British. This is a measure of the careless manner in which Indian history has been studied till now. Visually identifiable things like this pinnacle too have been misinterpreted with impunity. The lotus-top of the dome, below the pinnacle, is an unmistakable Hindu sign. A full-scale figure of this pinnacle is inlaid in the eastern courtyard.

The decorative girdle around the lower part of the dome also depicts lotus petals, which is a strictly Hindu motif.

A close-up of the upper portion of the pinnalce of the Taj Mahal, photographed from the parapet beneath the protruding dome.

The Hindu horizontal crescent and the coconut top together look like a trident from the garden level.

Islamic crescents are always oblique. Moreover they are almost always complete circles leaving a little opening for a star.

This Hindu pinnacle had all these centuries been misinterpreted as an Islamic crescent and star or a lightning conductor installed by the British.

The embossed writing on the pinnacle needs a thorough forensic probe. Researchers must climb up to the upper-part of the pinnacle shown above to closely decipher the crude lettering on the pitcher front below the coconut design. It is suspected that the first British archaeological chief in India, Alexander Cunningham got the Islamic slogan Allaho Akbar embossed on the metal surface with a flame-thrower stove. Since Cunningham had retired as a Major - General from the British Indian Army engineering group it is believed that among the trusted lieutenants whom he entrusted that forging job was one Taylor and others who took care to imprint their own names too at the same spot at the front or back. Gen. Cunningham was made the first archaeological chief in India only because he had suggested to his higher-ups a cunning plan to attribute most historical edifices in India to Muslims to put them at loggerheads with Hindus to ensure perpetuation of British rule in India. It was

in pursuance of that nefarious plan that Cunnigham attributed most historical bridges towers, forts, mansions, townships etc. in India to invading Muslims. It is that brazen chicanery of his which hangs like a halter around India's historical neck.

This full scale figure of the pinnacle on the dome, has been inlaid in the red-stone courtyard of the Taj Mahal.

One may see it to the east at the foot of the riverside arch

of the flanking building wrongly dubbed as Jawab (counterpoise) alias Jamiat Khana (community hall) by Muslim usurpers. Such floor-sketches in courtyards are a common Hindu trait. In Fatehpur Sikri it is the backgammon board which is sketched in a central courtyard. That the pinnacle design has been sketched on the eastern flank is also significant since the east is of primordial importance in Vedic culture.

The coconut-top and the bent mango leaves underneath, resting on a kalash (i.e. a water pot) is a sacred Hindu motif. Hindu shrines in the Himalayan foothills have identical pinnacles. The eastern location of the sketch is also typically Hindu. The length measures almost 32 ft.

The apex of the lofty entrance arches on all four sides of the Taj Mahal bears this red and white lotus trident - indicating that the building originated as a Hindu temple. The Koranic lettering forming the middle strip was grafted after Shahjahan seized the building from Jaipur state's Hindu ruler. Notice the patches of marble of dissimilar sizes and shades around the Koran, making it clear that the stones bearing Koranic extracts were used only to fill up gaping cavities left after digging out Sanskrit inscriptions and Vedic idols around the archways on all four sides of the Taj edifice.

This is the Dhatura flower essential for Hindu Shiva worship. The flower is depicted in the shape of the sacred esoteric Hindu incantation 'OM'. Embossed designs of this blooming 'OM', are drawn over the exterior of the octagonal central sanctum of Shiva where now a fake grave in Mumtaz's name, has been planted. While perambulating around the central chamber one may see such 'OM' designs all along the exterior surface of the marble wall.

Also on the same wall (not seen in this photo) are embossed marble panels showing foliage of the conch-shell design which again is a sacred Hindu motif.

Such are the magnificent marble-paved shining, cool, white bright rooms of the Taj Mahal temple palace's marble ground floor.

Even the lower third portion of the walls is covered with magnificent marble mosaic. The doorway at the left looks suspiciously closed with a stone slab. One can perambulate through these rooms around the

central octagonal sanctorum now occupied by Mumtaz's fake grave. The aperture seen through the central door, enabled perambulating devotees to keep their eyes fixed on the Shiva icon in the central chamber. This perambulatory passage is yet another proof of the edifice having originated as a temple.

Hindu Shiva icons are consecrated in two chambers one above the other. Therefore Shahjahan had to raise two graves in the name of Mumtaz - one in the marble basement and the other on the ground floor to desecrate and hide both the Shiva emblems from public view. That explains why two cenotaphs on two stories had to be erected for a single corpse.

Such are the rooms on the 1st floor of the marble structure of the Taj Mahal. The two staircases leading to this upper floor are kept locked and barred since Shahjahan's time. The ceiling of these upper storey chambers is darkened by smoke-soot because Mogul troopers who encamped in these rooms to uproot and carry away silver doors, the gold railing and other wealth lighted fires to heat water and cook meals.

The floor and the walls of such upper floor rooms can be seen in the picture to have been stripped off their marble panels. Shahjahan used that uprooted marble from the upper floor for constructing graves and engraving the Koran because he did not know wherefrom to procure marble matching the splendour of the rest of the Taj Mahal. He was also so stingy as not to want to spend much even on converting a robbed Hindu temple into an Islamic mausoleum. He addressed four letters to Raja Jaisingh of Jaipur to send some sundry marble. That was adding insult to injury. Should Jaisingh be expected to supply marble to disfigure his own confiscated, plundered temple-palace by littering it with Islamic lettering and cenotaphs ? And therefore Jaisingh not only refused to supply marble but also detained quarry workers.

This staircase and another symmetrical one at the other end lead down to the storey beneath the marble platform. Two such staircases (one each at the eastern and western ends) behind the marble plinth take one to the nether chambers.

Visitors may go to the back of the marble plinth at the eastern or western end and descend down the staircase because it is open to the sky. But at the foot the archaeology department has set up an iron-grill door which it keeps locked. Yet one may peep inside from the iron grill in the upper part of the door.

Shahjahan had sealed even these two staircases. It was the British who opened them. But from Shahjahan's time the stories below and above the marble ground floor have been barred to visitors. We are still following Mogul dictates and Muslim secrecy though long free from Mogul Islamic rule.

One of the 22 locked rooms in the secret storey beneath the marble platform of the Taj Mahal, which the Archaeological Survey

of India keeps conspiratorially locked to hoodwink the public. Therefore the public must pressurize the Government to open all locked and sealed chambers in all monuments including the Taj.

Strips of ancient Hindu paint are seen on the wall flanking the doorway. The niches above had paintings of Hindu gods, obviously rubbed off by Muslim desecrators.

The rooms may be seen door-within-door in a row. If the public knew that the Taj Mahal is a structure hiding hundreds of rooms they would insist on seeing the whole of it. At present they only peep into the grave chamber and walk away.

One of the 22 rooms in the secret storey underneath the marble plinth of the Taj Mahal. Many such features of the Taj remain

unknown to the public so long as they see it only as a tomb. If the public knew how much it is missing in the Taj Mahal it will insist that the government unseal all the seven stories in all its buildings.

A corner of one of the 22 rooms in the secret storey immediately below the marble platform of the Taj Mahal. Note the strips of Hindu paint on the wall. The ventilator at the left, meant for air and light from the riverside, has been crudely walled up by Shahjahan. He did not bother even to plaster it. Had Shahjahan built the Taj as a mausoleum what was the purpose of such 22 rooms? And why are they kept locked? Such crude, unplastered fillings constitute Shahjahan's much-flaunted building-work which is carefully and deliberately hidden from the public.

One of the 22 riverside rooms in a secret storey of the Taj Mahal unknown to the public. Shahjahan far from building the shining marble Taj wantonly disfigured it. Here he has crudely walled up a doorway. Such imperial Mogul vandalism lies hidden from the public. This room is in the red stone storey immediately below the marble plaform. Indian history has been turned topsy turvy in lauding destroyers as great builders. Therefore Shahjahan should be referred to not as the creator of the Taj but as a plunderer of its costly fixtures and disfigurer of the sublime, serene beauty of the holy Tejomahalaya.

A huge ventilator of one of the 22 rooms in a secret storey of the Taj, is seen here crudely sealed with unplastered bricks by Shahjahan. History has been so perverted and inverted that alien Muslims like Shahjahan who spoiled, damaged, desecrated and destroyed historic Hindu buildings, are being falsely paraded as great builders. This crude unplastered wall blocking the tall arched Hindu ventilator is Shahjahan's grand building work. Govt. of India's Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is hiding such gagging and blocking of the Taj Mahal from the public and fraudulently passing off the spic and span Hindu features of the Taj Mahal as the creations of Shahjahan.

This esoteric Hindu design is painted on the ceiling of one of the 22 locked rooms in the secret storey below the marble platform of the Taj Mahal. Its Hindu name is Rangavali i.e. colour pattern.

Had Shahjahan built the Taj Mahal he would not have kept such elaborately painted rooms sealed and barred to the public. Even now one can enter these rooms only if one can influence the archaeology department to remove its locks.

On the inner flank of the 22 locked rooms (in the secret storey in red stone below the marble platform) is this corridor about 8.5 ft. broad and 320 ft. long. Note the scallop design at the base of the plinth supporting the arches. This is Hindu decoration which

enables one to identify even a bare plinth as Hindu. The corridor is pitch dark because Shahjahan has sealed all the riverside ventilators allowing light and air.

Many such doorways of chambers in secret stories underneath the Taj Mahal have been sealed with brick and lime. Concealed inside could be valuable evidence such as Sanskrit inscriptions, Hindu idols, the original Hindu model of the Taj, the desecrated Shiva Linga, Hindu scriptures and temple equipment. The Congress Govt in Delhi is deliberately refraining from opening hundreds of such sealed chambers inside the Taj Mahal for fear of enraging Muslims and exposing the incompetence of historians worldwide.

Besides such sealed chambers there are many which are kept locked by the Government. The public must raise its voice to have these opened or should institute legal proceedings.

Shree P. N. Sharma of F-26 Safdarjang Development Area, New Delhi-16 who peeped through an aperture into these chambers in 1934 A. D. saw a pillared hall with images carved on the pillars. Mr. Ganu an optician of Swapna Nagari, Karve Road, Pune has also had a glimpse of some of those hidden dark chambers hiding vital evidence of the rape of the Hindu Taj Mahal. But the two

were teen-agers then and felt baffled by the incongruity of Vedic idols in what was advertised as an Islamic wonder-mausoleum.

Most people content to see Mumtaz's grave inside the Taj fail to go to the rear riverside. This is the riverside view. From here one may notice that the four-storied marble structure on top has below it two more stories in red stone. Note the window aperture in the arch at the left indicating that there are rooms inside. Inside the row of arches in the upper part of the wall are 22 rooms. In addition to the four stories in marble, this one shows red stone arches in the 5th storey.

The 6th storey lies in the plinth in the lower portion of the photo. In another photo a doorway would be seen in the left corner of the plinth, indicating the presence of apartments inside, from where one could emerge on the river for a bath.

This is a riverside view of the Taj Mahal. The four-storied marble structure above has under it these two stories reaching down to the river level. The 22 rooms shown in other photos are behind that line of arches seen in the middle. Each arch is flanked by Hindu lotus discs in white marble. Just above the ground level

is the plinth. In the left corner of the plinth is a doorway indicating that inside the plinth are many rooms sealed by Shahjahan. One could step out to the river bank from the door at the left. The 7th storey is surmised to be under the plinth below the ground because every ancient Hindu mansion had a basement. Excavation to reach the basement chambers should start under this door. There is an identical door (not seen in this photo) at the right corner of the plinth.

Mumtaz's so-called graves (in the marble chamber and the basement) are above these two red stone stories. That raises a suspicion that Mumtaz is not at all buried in the Taj Mahal because how can a corpse be buried on a stone base two stories above the river level ? Her mock-burial was a mere ruse to capture and plunder the Hindu mansion.

This is the massive octagonal well with palatial apartments along its seven stories. A royal staircase descends right down to the

water level indicated by the tiny white patch showing the reflection of the photo flash. As one stands on the red stone pavement facing the marble plinth of the Taj Mahal, the red stone octagonal tower at the left-hand extremity houses the well seen above.

This was the traditional treasury well of the Hindu temple palace. Treasure chests used to be stacked in the lower stories. Accountants, cashiers and treasurers sat in the upper stories. On being besieged if the building had to be surrendered to the enemy the treasure chests used to be pushed into the water for salvage later after recapture. For real research, water should be pumped out of this well to reveal the evidence that lies at the bottom. This well is inside a tower near the so-called mosque to the west of the marble Taj. Had the Taj been a mausoleum this octagonal multi-storied well would have been superfluous.

An aerial view of the Taj Mahal alias Tejo Mahalaya, ancient Hindu temple palace complex in Agra. For the last 300 years the world has been fooled into believing that this stupendous edifice was built by the 5th - generation Mogul emperor Shahjahan to commemorate one of his dead wives - Mumtaz. The two flanking buildings although identical, only the one in the rear is known as a mosque. But since the building on the east is a non-mosque its counterpart on the west must also be a non-mosque. Though it is being misused as a mosque, its qibla is not aligned to the

Kaba and it also lacks a muezzin's tower.

The Taj Mahal has seven stories. Six of them lie sealed and barred concealing rich evidence. The marble building in the centre is flanked by two symmetrical ones. The one in the foreground is the eastern one. The one in the background is being misrepresented as a mosque because it is to the west. Those should not have been identical if only one was to be a mosque. In the courtyard at the foot of the eastern building is inlaid a full-scale replica of the trident pinnacle. The tiny tower at the left near the western building, encloses a huge octagonal seven-storied well.

This is a riverside view of the Taj Mahal. The four-storied marble structure above has under it these two stories reaching down to the river level. The 22 rooms shown in other photos are behind that line of arches seen in the middle. Each arch is flanked by Hindu lotus discs in white marble. Just above the ground level is the plinth. In the left corner of the plinth notice the doorway indicating that inside the plinth are many rooms sealed by Shahjahan. One could step out to the river bank from the door at the left. The 7th storey is surmised to be under the plinth below the ground because every ancient Hindu mansion had a basement. Excavation to reach the basement chambers should start under this door.

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PAVANA	SOMA	ISA
VARUNA	PRTHVI	ADITYA
GAGANA	YAMA	AGNI

The square diagram to the right above enclosing nine equal divisions, pertaining to the Vedic deities personifying cosmic forces, forms the sanctum of every Vedic temple, and is known as the Vastu Purush Mandal.

That square sanctum is then enclosed in an octagonal frame as depicted in the diagram at the left. That is the contour of the sanctum of the Vishnu temple at Deogarh (India) and of every other Vedic temple.

Figures 8 and 108 are considered very holy in Vedic tradition because of their cosmic significance. For instance the distance between the earth and the sun is 108 times the diameter of the sun, the distance from the earth to the Moon is 108 times the diameter of the Moon, modern computer calculations are octal; satellites sent into space are octagonal, and so on.

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Above is a sketch of the Brahadeeshwar temple of Tanjavur in Tamilnadu province of India. The layout of the Taj Mahal shown on the front cover of this book and in the arrial view of the Taj shown hereunder being identical proves that so-called Taj Mahal originated as a Shiv temple centuries before the 5th generation Mogul emperor Shahjahan.

All ancient churches in Europe follow the same layout because they too were pre-Christian Vedic temples which were misused as churches by invading Christian zealots.

Three centuries later Mohammedans too emulating Christian usurpation advertised and misused captured Vedic temples and palaces as Islamic mosques and tombs.

Emperor Shahjehan himself and his son and successor Aurangzeb have been very honest in laying no claim to the authorship of the Taj Mahal. So much so that the very name Taj Mahal doesn't figure in their court records or contemporary Islamic chronicles.

Contrarily Shahjahan's letter dated 3 February 1633 (listed S. No. 35, earlier No. 46) in the State Archives in Bikaner (India), addressed to Raja Jaisingh orders marble from the Makrana quarry (in Jaipur State) for Islamic tampering in the Taj Mahal and directs that the marble be delivered at the 'buildings' in the Mogul capital

Agra signifying the Taj Mahal complex comprising of several seven storied buildings. It needs to be noted that all Mogul records shun the use of the term Taj Mahal like a plague because that is the holy Hindu, Sanskrit Vedic term, Tejomahalaya (Shiv) temple So-called historians all over the world are totally ignorant of this vital basic detail.

The building above located in Agra is being currently dubbed as Itimad Uddaula. That being a title conferred on Muslim courtiers it is absurd to designate a building by that title.

The Muslim canard is that Mirza Ghias Beg who held that title during the 4th generation Mogul emperor Jehangir's regime, had that grand palatial building raised over his corpse. By whom ? By his wife, son, daughter or his son-in-law emperor ? And if Ghias Beg's corpse could command such a palace for it where are the palaces in which Ghias Beg lived when alive and kicking ? Historians the world over have proved highly gullible in gulping such Muslim canards and have totally failed in their academic duty to closely cross-question such bogus claims.

Mirza Ghias Beg was the father of Nurjahan. Emperor Salim Jehangir being infatuated by Nurjahan's beauty, had her husband murdered to kidnap and detain Nurjahan as an inmate of his teeming harem. Consequently her father was elevated to the post of chief minister and was decorated with the title Itimad Uddaula.

The latter too had a large harem in the usual Muslim tradition. Even so there is only one pair of cenotaphs in the central chamber of the above building for Mr. and Mrs. (Which Mrs ? Since he had one too many) Ghias Begs.

But that is not all. Every room of the above palatial building is cluttered with Mr. and Mrs. pairs of Muslim cenotaphs though every Muslim dignitary had scores of wives.

And yet none of the cenotaphs bears any name, that is why those cenotaphs are mere Muslim stamps and scare-crow-gimmicks to occupy Hindu mansions.

Had the above building been really raised over Ghias Beg's corpse how come other Mohds. and Ahmeds and Fatimas and Ayeshas rest there incognito?

Had the building been a sombre multitudinous Muslim mausoleum why should its walls be adorned with decorative painted designs? And why should the building have three stories built in exquisite multi-coloured gleaming marble ? Besides the two stories seen in the photo above the third is underground. All such considerations prove that the above building is the king's palace built during Raja Paramardidev's regime 500 years prior to Shahjahan, as mentioned in the Sanskrit inscription quoted in an earlier chapter..

The above analysis should serve to alert honest historians all over the world to totally jettison the current gullible mode of teaching and replace it by the legal mode of judicious cross-questioning of every claim and assertion.

INDEX

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[illegible]

[illegible] M.A., LL.B., [illegible] at the [illegible] to Singapore at the age of 24.

[illegible] of the Indian National Army [illegible] and later a co-worker of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

After the end of World War II, Oak [illegible] from Singapore to Calcutta across the border jungles of several countries.

From 1947 to 1974 his profession has been mainly journalism having worked on the editorial staffs of the Hindustan Times and the Statesman, as a class I officer in Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, and as editor in the American Embassy's information service, all in New Delhi.

Around 1959, Oak developed a curious new insight into history which led him to some stunning discoveries as a result of his absorbing hobby of visiting historic sites. He then founded (June 14, 1964) the Institute for Rewriting Indian History and wrote several books [illegible] here in this volume.

Oak's historical acumen led him to discover further that even world history has gone wrong. His discoveries have therefore, outgrown the name and scope of the Institute for Rewriting Indian History. Having discovered that from time immemorial up to the Mahabharat War, Vedic culture and Sanskrit pervaded the whole world.

Oak is keen to find a world Vedic Heritage University to educate the world in the primordial Vedic unity of all humanity. To that end he invites correspondence from all those willing to help.

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HINDI SAHITYA SADAN

2, B.D Chambers, 10/54 D.B. Gupta Road,
Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005
Ph. : 23553624, Tele Fax-51545969
e-mail : indiabooks@rediffmail.com